MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

MRS ANN JOHNSTONE,

WILLOW PARK, GREENOCK.

"THE MERCY OF THE LORD IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO CHILDREN'S CHILDREN."

PSALM CIII. 17.

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH: WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND SONS.

GLASGOW: W. COLLINS, AND D. ROBERTSON.

LONDON: HAMILTON AND CO.

MDCCCXLVI.

MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

TO THE

FAMILY OF THE LATE MRS JOHNSTONE,

THE FOLLOWING RECOLLECTIONS

OF

THEIR MOTHER,

ARE,

WITH UNFEIGNED ESTEEM AND AFFECTION,

INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR OWN AND THEIR PARENTS' FRIEND.

PREFACE.

The following brief Memoir was originally printed for private circulation. The writer would never have presumed to give it to the world, had not its publication been urged both orally and in writing, by a number of Christian Friends, whose opinions she felt to be entitled to respectful consideration. With great reluctance she at length yielded to their reiterated solicitations; and, the family having kindly given their consent, she now, with the utmost diffidence, sends forth this little volume, praying that its perusal may be blessed by Him, to whose glory the subject of it lived, and rejoicing in whom, she died. As a specimen of many similar communications, addressed to the writer, she selects the following, the perusal of which, she trusts, will lead her readers to the conclusion, that she was not altogether without excuse, in consenting to submit to the public eye, what has been to her indeed a labour of love.

A distinguished minister* in Glasgow wrote thus:—

"22d July 1845.

"My dear Mrs ——,—Excuse me for being so long in offering you my warmest thanks for the truly excellent biographical sketch you have been enabled to prepare. I have read it with many tears,—tears of joy and delight. You had an excellent subject prepared for you by the grace of God; and the delineation of it has led you to pour forth exuberantly your mind and heart. She was indeed a daughter of the 'King,' all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold. The King himself greatly desired her beauty. No wonder that you who saw it so much, admired it so highly; and now she has been brought with gladness and rejoicing into the King's palace, whither you, as one of her many companions, are to follow her. You thought much of the daughter here, you will think still more of her there; but most of all, of the King himself, appearing in his matchless beauty, in the land afar off. * * * My chief design in this note is to press the duty of sending forth a large edition of the Memoir. It is not only adapted to please, but to profit all classes:—Christian females,

* The Rev. Dr. Heugh, who has since joined the glorified society in heaven.

by showing what they may attain and accomplish by the grace of God :—Christians of all classes by presenting captivating views of the pleasures of holiness, of close walking with God, and high attainments in religious experience :—Christian ministers in the same way; and even those who are Christians only in name, by showing them how remote from vital piety they are, and leading them to Christ for life and all things. * * *

"Every one who has read the volume asks, why is it not published? I take the liberty of pressing the same question, and of entreating, that for the glory of Christ and the edification of his body, it may go forth in hundreds and thousands.—Ever yours respectfully and affectionately."

Another minister writes :—

"My dear Friend,—I shall not occupy your time by stating what I think of Mrs Johnstone's Memoir, having done this already. My object in writing you now is to press upon you, as a matter of duty, the propriety of publishing the work. I trust none of the family of our beloved deceased friend will object to this being done. Mrs Johnstone would have shrunk from anything of the kind, had she been living. But you know how entirely she held herself at the disposal of her Saviour, and

how desirous she was, that he might be glorified in her and by her. The narrative of the rich and abundant grace manifested in the life and death of herself and her lovely daughter, is fitted to produce a deep and salutary impression, and if good is to be accomplished by its publication, which no one can doubt who has read the deeply interesting narrative, then I am sure she would not have interposed her *veto* to prevent the good from being done. I might say much more on behalf of the suggestion I have made, but deem it unnecessary, as I trust both yourself and the family of Mrs Johnstone will overcome all the feelings that may stand in the way of conferring a precious gift on many, who, through means of its perusal, will, by the divine blessing, be led to receive God's unspeakable gift.—Believe me to be, most truly yours."

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MEMOIR

MRS ANN JOHNSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

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REJOICING in the blessed promise, "that the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance," and believing that fellow-pilgrims have a certain instrumentality in perpetuating their memory—it being theirs to gather up the fragments, to record the names, the work, and the graces of those who have finished their course in this world, "that the generation to come might know them,"—the writer has compiled the following reminiscences of a mother and daughter, "lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death not divided." May the God of all grace bless the record, however simple and imperfect, of

the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope, of the subject of these notices, and of the early maturity of those gracious principles which adorned her beloved daughter!

Mrs Johnstone, whose maiden name was Ann Stuart, was born in Greenock, 27th October 1782, of parents whose character and rank in life placed them in a station of extensive influence among a numerous circle of attached friends and relatives. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, being "blameless and harmless, the children of God, without rebuke," they were enabled, in their connexion with the church of Christ, and in all their intercourse with the world, "to hold forth the word of life," and to prove bright examples in their whole temper, spirit, and deportment, of the humbling, sanctifying, and elevating power of the truth as it is in Jesus. On this account, it may be said that Mrs Johnstone had, from infancy, peculiar religious advantages, which she always acknowledged with lively gratitude.

Although only about five years of age when deprived of a pious mother, she ever retained a lively recollection of many of the circumstances connected with that event, and of the spirit displayed by relatives on the occasion; especially the submission to the Divine will, evinced by her godly father, who was then left with a family of young children.

It appears from the testimony of those who were

the associates of her childhood and youth, that she had, from her earliest years, been the subject of Divine grace. Her love of truth preventing her from uttering any word approaching to equivocation or falsehood; her hatred of sin causing her to dread any indulgence in frivolous jesting; her delight in the Sabbath, and all its blessed ordinances; her relish for the company and conversation of the godly in whatever station of life they might move; these were precious evidences that the Lord Jesus Christ had, from her infancy, set his love upon her. Indeed, her mind, even in childhood, seems to have been so entirely under gracious influence, that profitable lessons were derived by her from every event that took place. She was particularly fond of listening to the enlightened spiritual conversation of some of the excellent ones of the earth who occasionally resided at her father's house during communion seasons; and she has often been heard, at a subsequent period, to speak of the blessing which her father had received by entertaining these pious strangers, in the valuable instructions which she had obtained, and the salutary impressions which were made upon her mind, by their example and conversation.

Convictions of her own sinful state by nature were often, in her youth, very deeply impressed upon her mind, and relief from this depression seems, from time to time, to have been obtained by reading and hearing about Jesus and his salvation

As her education advanced, she was sent to a boarding school in Edinburgh. While there, her convictions of sin were so renewed and deepened as to produce a scene of mental conflict which at length affected, in an alarming manner, her bodily health. As has been the case with many in passing through the same strait gate, she supposed her guilt to be so great, and her state of mind so peculiar, that no one else could understand it, and she therefore revealed her feelings to none. Her agony of mind, together with the loss of appetite, and sleepless nights, made her unable to rise from bed; for, in addition to deep and piercing convictions of sin, she had, for a long period, been harassed with overwhelming temptations and blasphemous suggestions coming, doubtless, from the enemy of souls. One day, as she lay in bed, her anguish of spirit rose to such a height that it seemed to her as if she was hanging over that place of woe into which no ray of hope ever enters. Her mental agony had such an effect upon her whole frame, that breathing became difficult, and the bed on which she lay seemed as if trembling beneath her. This was indeed the hour and the power of darkness; but although she knew it not, the Comforter who was to relieve her soul was not far away, and her broken bleeding heart was about to be bound up by the tender words of Him "who hath the tongue of the learned, that he should speak a word in season to the weary." The Holy Spirit, who had so emptied and humbled this benighted but chosen soul, began

his blessed work as the Comforter, by shedding a ray of light upon that passage in the history of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, where he is represented in combat with Apollyon, and, after a fearful struggle, as obtaining deliverance. By consulting the passage referred to, it will be perceived that the words of support throughout the combat, and of triumph at its close, given to Christian, are these: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise; nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." These words arrested this tempest-tossed young Christian, and were followed by a succession of invitations and promises from the word of God, brought home to the soul with a sweetness and power that caused her, when speaking of this period in after life, to say, "the chamber where the suffering had been such, that, 'unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence,' was converted into the very suburb of heaven itself, where not a few glimpses of the cross, and of the infinite love of Him who hung upon it, were obtained. Sin did then appear exceedingly sinful and hateful, when beheld in the sufferings unto death of the Son of God, the well-beloved and only begotten of the Father; but in looking to a bleeding Saviour as my surety, redeeming me from the curse of the law by being made a curse for me, the burdened conscience was relieved, because I saw the law, which is holy, just, and good, the moral transcript of the holiness and justice of the Lawgiver, fully honoured, and a

free and full pardon flowing to the chief of sinners, through a channel glorifying to every attribute of Deity." The God of hope thus filled her with all joy and peace in believing, and changed the storm which had threatened to overwhelm her, into a calm; the anchor of hope was cast upon a rock, *the Rock of Ages*, and fixed upon an unseen Jesus within the veil. Inward peace having thus taken the place of mental conflict, bodily health was gradually restored—the joy of the Lord was found to be indeed strength; and for many days she went forth rejoicing in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness under an almost cloudless sky.

The illumination of the understanding by the Holy Spirit had communicated a greatly enlarged and experimental knowledge of the way of salvation, as manifesting the infinite riches of free grace, and as presenting remission of sins, and acceptance in the sight of God, through faith in the atoning blood of that sacrifice, which was offered up, once for all. She saw that the guilt and stain of sin could in no other way be removed; that spiritual blessings could in no other way come down to fallen creatures than by this channel; and she perceived how illustriously the Divine wisdom and prudence were displayed in adjusting the claims of justice and mercy, in the grand affair of man's redemption—securing the honour of God and his law, at the same time that the recovery and salvation of sinners are made sure. She felt that every perfection of the Divine nature furnished

reasons for rendering obedience to his commands. The wisdom of his counsels, the riches of his grace, and the grandeur of his works, recommended his law and government; and she proved that these views were graciously impressed upon her soul, by walking in close fellowship with God. From this period, although clouds did return after the sunshine of Divine influence, her progress in grace and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was manifest, all around testifying that in her they witnessed the fulfilment of the declaration: "The righteous, also, shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Having been "apprehended" by Christ, she manifested that she had chosen the good part that would not be taken from her. The Lord had said, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" and she had responded, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul;" and the result was, that the world, in its fashions, customs, and amusements, presented no charms for her. Higher and nobler aims engaging her attention, she dared to be singular; though in the world, she was not of it, her daily concern being to know her heavenly Master's will, that she might do it, depending upon his promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness;" and thus there was a purity about her whole deportment that struck even the most careless observer.

She was the last of his daughters left with her

revered father, and she felt peculiar enjoyment in the tender performance of the filial duties which he required at her hands. During the last three years of his life, owing to the infirm state of his health, her close attendance was indispensable to his comfort; and this was another marked period of her history which she delighted to recal with grateful praise, feeling, to use her own expression, that her duties to her beloved father, "were a screen between the world and her." His child-like spirit, his delight in the word of God and prayer, together with his relish for hearing of everything connected with the advancement and glory of Christ's kingdom, made her intercourse with him a privilege of no ordinary value. The retirement which she enjoyed, afforded an opportunity of extensive reading, which she diligently improved in studying the sacred records, and of making herself acquainted with the works of some of our soundest and ablest divines. Flavel, Boston, Baxter, Rutherford, Willison, and the Erskines, were among the authors whose writings she delighted at this time to peruse. Through life it was apparent how great was the benefit she derived from having the mind stored with the varied aspects of Divine truth illustrated in the works of these men of God, so eminently taught, and so richly endowed with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. With the Divine blessing, it was the means of keeping her stedfast in holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and of preventing her from being carried about with divers winds of doctrine.

In referring to this season, she often would say, "In what amazing condescension did the Lord deal with a sinful worm of the dust in the abundant communications of his grace and Spirit then vouchsafed!" Frequently, from five o'clock in the morning until a late hour at night, the soul was so filled with believing views of the blessed Jesus, as a King and a Priest upon his throne for ever, that scarcely a wandering thought would be suffered to obtrude or draw away the mind; and, sometimes, in secret prayer and spiritual meditation, the Divine character and perfections in the scheme of apostate man's redemption by a crucified Redeemer, the love of Christ, the promises of the covenant, and the joys and glories of heaven, were exhibited by the Spirit with such a vividness of spiritual perception, as to be too bright for mortal eyes to behold; and, as the tide of light, life, and love continued to flow into the soul, she was made to cry out, like the godly John Welsh, "Hold, Lord, thy weak vessel can contain no more." It was evident, that on the mount of meditation, faith, and prayer, she was permitted, at this time, as from the top of Pisgah to behold the goodly land, the heavenly Canaan, and to enjoy many precious seasons of blessed communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. In embracing the "great mystery of godliness," God manifest in the flesh, she saw that a full atonement had been made for sin, and an everlasting righteousness brought in; that the Son of God had come to seek, and save those

that were lost; that he had conquered sin and death; that he lives as Intercessor and Advocate with the Father; and that, therefore, believers should rejoice in their happy relation to God as his adopted children and heirs, and in their union to the Son of the Father as being members of his body, and co-heirs with him, and that they are living below their privilege when they are not filled "with joy and peace in believing."

As her beloved parent drew near the close of his life, she had the happiness of witnessing his growth in grace, and advancing meetness for glory. As a ground of comfort to him at the thought of leaving her, she reminded him that the God who had done so great things for him, was, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and would continue to supply all her need; the fulfilment of which declaration, she would say, had been sweetly realized by her in the whole of her subsequent life, as she could apply to herself the Psalmist's words: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." She often spoke of the 103d Psalm as having been made particularly precious to her at this time of need, dwelling upon the words, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," as expressive of the exquisite tenderness of the Divine compassion; and she would go on commenting upon the promise, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's

children." The mercy of God, from everlasting in its counsels, and in its consequences, was a theme on which she ever delighted to expatiate. "The springs," she would say, "are always full, and the streams of mercy always flowing unto thousands of generations of those that keep his covenant, and claim its provisions and privileges for themselves; and to make his people truly, completely, and eternally happy, God declares, 'I will be their God;' takes them not only into covenant, but into communion with himself, gives them an interest in Christ's fulness, and makes over to them all the benefits of his glorious undertaking as Mediator—all he has done, all he is doing, all he has promised in the gospel, all he hath prepared in heaven—all is theirs;" and she would sum all up by saying, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

Not very long after her father's death, a young man, Mr William Johnstone, a member of a highly respectable family in Dumfriesshire, paid his addresses to her, which, after prayerful deliberation, she accepted. His business requiring his personal presence in Newfoundland, eight years elapsed before they saw it to be their duty to fulfil their engagement. Many providences occurred during this long period, which called for the exercise of faith and patience, and which proved to her salutary discipline; for she endeavoured to cast her every care upon her covenant God, believing that he would perfect what concerned

his glory in her and by her, leaving all in his gracious hands as to the issue of her future lot, and actively giving herself to his service in a variety of works of faith and labours of love, for the benefit of her fellow-men, both as regarded their temporal and spiritual interests.

It was her earnest desire with regard to the object of her affections, that the relation might never be formed, unless it were a union ratified in heaven, each of them first savingly united to Christ, and then married in the Lord. Very remarkable were some of the seasons she had of intense solicitude for the spiritual life and health of her betrothed; and many were the precious promises she was enabled to lay hold upon and plead in his behalf, which, she afterwards said, she had lived to see graciously fulfilled, both in the temporal and spiritual blessings bestowed so richly upon him.

By a few extracts from two manuscript books, found among her papers after her death, something respecting the exercises of her mind during these years may be gathered. The first is dated—

"Greenock, 5th July 1811.

"O Lord, enable me to record this to thy glory, the good of my never-dying soul, and the disappointment of all my spiritual 'enemies.'

"I write this in order to comfort me in future days of darkness which it may please God, in his infinite wisdom, to visit me with, before I leave this transitory

world. This day, and many days past, have been spent in much want of comfort, owing to indwelling sin and prevailing corruption, which has made me fear lest I should be deceiving myself, when I would lay claim to an interest in the blessed Redeemer; but he who delights in showing mercy has heard my desires, although I was unable to utter them, by giving me a clear scriptural view of his being the God of my youth. How delightful is it to look back on that sweet period, when, in highly favoured moments, I was often enabled by his grace to make choice of God in Christ for my God and portion, for time and eternity; nor was this done in a careless manner, but with all the powers of my soul, utterly distrusting my own strength, and relying wholly on the covenant grace and strength of my Redeemer to enable me to be faithful unto death. Surely nothing but the unmerited grace of that God who is, 'The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' inclined my heart to this, which is by nature at enmity with him. I will, therefore, trust in his well-ordered covenant, that he who has begun the good work in my soul, will, by the power of his grace, carry it on, and perfect it in me at the coming of Jesus Christ, although my faith is often weak and wavering. Praise the Lord, then, O my soul, and forget not all his gracious benefits."

"GREENOCK, 7th Sept. 1811.

"Lord thou hast been afflicting me gently, in great kindness and tender mercy. I confess, if thou wert

to deal with me according to my sins, I would be utterly consumed before thee; but ever blessed be thy holy name, thou hast not looked upon me as I am in myself, and in my sins, but in the face of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son; therefore thou hast allowed me to receive all the afflictions of this life, for his sake, as tokens of thy fatherly care and kindness to me, knowing that by them thou intendest I should grow more humble, wise, watchful, and diligent, that so I may be prepared for my latter end. That this may be the blessed fruit of this affliction, may the Lord of his infinite mercy grant, for Christ's sake; and to him shall be all the glory for ever! Amen."

"PORT-GLASGOW, Sacrament Sabbath Evening.
11th October, 1812.

"O my God, to the glory of thy free unmerited grace, and the comfort of my soul, I will this night, by the assistance of thy good Spirit, write what thou hast done for my soul this day. Blessed be thy holy name for allowing me the privilege of renewing my covenant with thee at thy holy table. There thou hast enabled me to surrender myself entirely to thee, in all that I am, and all that I have, to be for ever the Lord's; and thou hast given me good reason to believe that thou hast accepted my poor offering, by enabling me, a poor worm of the dust, to take an unshaken hold of thy well-ordered covenant, for time and eternity, as all my salvation, as all my desire.

In looking forward to time, I feared lest, through the allurements of the world, the temptations of the devil, or the deceitfulness of my own desperately wicked heart, I should at any time turn aside from the living God, and make shipwreck of the faith. *But no!* this cannot be, as this solemn transaction was done in humble and entire reliance on the promised strength of my Almighty Saviour. Therefore, thou didst allow me, O gracious God! to take hold of thy promise: 'And as thy days, so shall thy strength be;' and thou art a faithful God, who hast promised, and also wilt do it. Glory for ever be to thy great name, in time and through the endless ages of eternity!"

CHAPTER II.

Acknowledgment of God in the prospect of her marriage—Prayer for her husband—Resignation to the Divine will—Devout breathings of her soul—Delight in prayer--Self-distrust—Reliance on the love of a covenant God—Thanksgiving for mercies—Prayer for her children—Desire that Christ might be glorified by her in life and death—Review and renewal of covenant engagements—Delight in communion seasons—Self-consecration—Desire to be with Christ—Benefit derived from the ministry of Dr Scott.

MRS JOHNSTONE'S marriage took place at Greenock, 29th March, 1814. In immediate view of this important relation being formed, she wrote in her little diary, in which she occasionally recorded her reflections, as follows:—

"GREENOCK, 7th March, 1814.

"Having such an important change in life immediately before me, I desire to look anew to thy well-ordered covenant for those supplies of grace and strength which are there treasured up for poor sinners such as I, who feel that of themselves they cannot so much as think a good thought. Being, therefore, so totally wretched and miserable in myself, O give grace to look to thee for wisdom to direct in every step in life; guard me against the temptations of the

world, and the deceitfulness of riches, should it please thee to bestow them, and keep me from being overwhelmed with any of the trials of life. I desire to cling to thy promise, that as my day is, so will thy strength be perfected in weakness. I entreat thee, O most gracious God, for the sake of Jesus, whom thou hearest always, that thou wouldst grant grace to my dear friend, with whom I expect to enter into the closest earthly relation, that we may be enabled to 'live together as heirs of the grace of life,' having a sweet foretaste here of the happy eternity we shall then hope to enjoy. Thou knowest, O Lord, it has been my prayer for many years, if our union was not to be for thy glory and our good, that our intentions might, in thy providential arrangements, be prevented. I still repeat it, trusting to thy all-sufficient grace to support me, should this be thy will. But if thou hast otherwise ordained, do thou, most blessed Jesus, who didst honour a marriage with thy bodily presence while on earth, be graciously present with us in Spirit, that we may be enabled not only to love each other with a pure heart fervently, but to have our supreme affections placed upon thee, that we may escape the snares of an evil world; and, by thy rich blessing, not only get the sanctified use of every comfort thou art graciously pleased to bestow on us, but may have all the waters of affliction we shall meet with turned into wine of strong consolation for the good of our souls. And now, Lord, I commit us both to thee: keep us safe unto the day

of eternal redemption, and the glory shall be thine for ever. Amen."

Paying a visit soon after her marriage, with her husband, to the home of his honoured parents, brothers, and sisters, she was received by them as a daughter and sister beloved. And the mutual good will and friendship then formed, continued, on both sides, to increase with every fresh visit she made, and every opportunity which they had of meeting each other.

During the whole of her married life, a full cup of prosperity was, in some respects, put into her hands; but grace enabled her, in the midst of all her comforts, to live as a stranger and pilgrim in a foreign land; whose home, inheritance, and treasure were in heaven, whither she was daily journeying in the bent and desires of her heart and the tenor of her conduct. There was, however, an ingredient in her cup that made her feel she was not without that sign of adoption, the discipline of the covenant. Mr Johnstone's business often calling him to Newfoundland, she was subjected to the pain of separation for many months, and on one or two occasions for two years. Extracts from her little manuscript books will show how prayerfully exercised she was under this trial, in seeking, both for herself and beloved husband, its sanctified use. She writes—

"GREENOCK, 19th November, 1815.

"My dear affectionate husband intends leaving for

Newfoundland to-morrow: may thy gracious presence be with him, O thou God of love, and may he experience thy kind providential care, as on former occasions, protecting him from every danger, and returning him to me in safety. While he beholds thy great wonders in the deep, may he be more and more convinced of his utter dependence on thee for all things, both for time and eternity. Take the direction of all his thoughts, and by thy Holy Spirit convince him that man, by nature, is in a gulf of misery and wretchedness, altogether lost and undone in himself; and, O most gracious God, enable him and me, and all with whom we are connected, to lay hold of those cords of love and mercy offered to us by the blessed Jesus, the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of whose love, neither angels nor men shall ever be able to comprehend. If so, O how blessed shall we be!—eternity itself will be too short to utter all the praises of our glorious Redeemer. Most gracious God, thou art the giver of every good and perfect gift. I thank thee for the strong affection thou hast implanted in our hearts towards each other. May we ever be kept from making idols of one another; but may the blessed Jesus reign supreme in our hearts, and we be enabled to live together, 'in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,' that we may be partakers of thy glory hereafter. Prepare us for all the afflictions of life; under them may we manifest that we are indeed the true children of God, by being in entire subjection to the

Father of our Spirits. Listen, O thou hearer of prayer, to the united supplications of the people of God, in behalf of my dear husband, and the present feeble desires of my soul, for the sake of the blessed Intercessor whom thou hearest always. Amen."

Again she writes—

"End of the year 1815, and commencement of 1816.

"O Lord, behold me, a poor wretched creature, utterly lost and undone in myself, having neither righteousness nor strength: look on me in mercy for the sake of Jesus, the Son of thy love, who ever lives, and ever pleads in our behalf at the mercy-seat; for his sake, graciously pardon all the sins of my past life, and grant me grace to spend the rest of my days in thy fear, and to thy honour and glory. Prepare me for all thy holy will. I desire unreservedly to commit my all into thy faithful hands, both for time and eternity. Extend thy protecting care to my dear husband, now at sea. Be his God and guide for ever and ever, enabling him to make choice of thee as his all-sufficient portion; and when his father and mother leave him, do thou, Lord, give him the sweet assurance, that thou art his Father and his God. Return him in safety, if it be thy holy will, and enable us to live together as thy redeemed people; but if thou call him away from me, O grant that we may meet in thy blessed abode, where we shall sin no more, nor sorrow any more; but shall see the blessed Jesus, and be made like

him, and shall no more have to complain of want of love, or of likeness to him, as I do this night; and under such a bereavement, grant, gracious God, I may be enabled to glorify thee, as one who knows that the righteous Judge of all the earth can only do that which is right. Trusting to thy almighty, promised, supporting grace, I desire to resign myself wholly to thy infinitely wise disposal; graciously hear, forgive, and accept, through the blessed Saviour. Amen."

Prayer was the element in which Mrs Johnstone lived and moved. She used to say, the way "to rejoice evermore," is to "pray without ceasing;" for the Divine injunction is, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgivings, let your requests be made known to God." We must not only keep up stated times of prayer, but seek to be ever in the spirit of prayer; and we must set apart special seasons of prayer, when anything burdens our spirits, as this is the true way to obtain relief when our affairs are perplexed. And, even under the most trying circumstances, we must join thanksgivings with our prayers, grateful acknowledgments for mercies that have been received, and that are mingled with the trial, the very least of which is more than we deserve. Surely we should endeavour to express our sense of the value of mercies that are new every moment, and fresh every morning, keeping up and encouraging a

continual sense of our dependence upon God for everything that renders the present life comfortable, or that opens to the eye of faith the prospect of all that blessedness which is connected with knowing the true God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is eternal life.

The following extracts afford a pleasing specimen of the manner in which Mrs Johnstone improved this distinguished privilege:—

"July 21.—Sabbath Evening.

"Blessed be thy great name, most gracious and adored Holy Lord God, for the liberty given this day to thy servant to proclaim the word of life to us, in the absence of our faithful pastor. Sweet is the answer of prayer; while thou art allowing me to take the comfort, I desire to give to thee all the glory; and O grant that I may be enabled to adopt the language of the text, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' Lord, save me from a name to live, while yet being dead; thinking myself something, while I am nothing, thus deceiving myself; but may I be enabled to evidence to myself, and all around me, by abounding in the fruits of righteousness, that I am indeed born from above. Search and try me, O thou heart-searching Jehovah, that I may be made to know the worst of myself now, in the day of health and strength, while the door of mercy stands open, and thou art waiting to be gracious, entreating guilty sinners to come unto

thee and be saved. O give unto me a God-glorifying view of the fulness and freeness of the blessed remedy provided for me, in and through the mediation and spotless righteousness of our blessed Redeemer. In attempting to review the operations of my heart in thy sight, alas, O Lord, I find I have been guilty of much self-love, when I ought to have been condemning myself in thy holy presence; but all these self-complacent thoughts I desire, with all my past sins, to confess, and bring them this night to the precious blood of Christ, to be pardoned, and blotted out for ever. Thou hast promised this: grant that I, a worthless sinner, may be made to experience the full accomplishment of the gracious promise, and have renewed strength to depart from all iniquity. Lord, thine I would be, save thou me with an everlasting salvation. I desire this night to return hearty thanks for the good accounts received from my dear, affectionate husband. O Lord, bless him with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus; preserve him from every evil, especially from the evil of sin. Restore us to each other, if it be thy holy will; and, as thou hast united us by the strongest earthly affection, which must sooner or later be dissolved, O grant that, by a rapid progress in grace, we may have the sweet assured evidence that we are bound by cords of love which cannot be broken, but shall last through an endless state of unmingled blessedness!"

"Sabbath, Greenock, 19th October.

"I am this day deprived of waiting on the Lord, in view of my immediate confinement; but, blessed be God, he is not restricted to temples made with hands, but is as near to his people on beds of languishing, or detained from his house by any other unavoidable cause, as he is in the midst of his assembled worshippers. Help me, then, O most gracious God! by thy good and Holy Spirit, to enjoy that sweet communion with thee, through Jesus Christ, which, if my heart deceive me not, I have frequently been favoured to experience in times that are past! I would this day, for thy glory and my comfort, take a review of all the way thou hast hitherto led me through my wilderness journey. O blessed God! all thy manner of dealing with me has been most gracious, thy faithfulness and love have ever been as the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, conducting me safely in peace and comfort through every trial in life; and, O glory be to thy great Name, that in view of this unknown trial, I have not to go to an unknown God, but unto thee, who hast been my God and my guide from my youth, and hast taken care of me ever since thou broughtest me into this world. And having given me thy faithful promise, that as my day is so shall my strength be, I look to thee, through Jesus Christ, with humble confidence, that thou wilt make good this promise to me at this time, since thou hast given

me faith to confide in it. I am persuaded there shall be a performance of thy good word, on which thou hast caused me to hope and trust. To me, O Lord, belong shame and confusion of face, that I have lived at such a distance from thee, the only source of light, and life, and joy; but unto thee belong honour and praise for evermore, that thy thoughts were thoughts of mercy towards me, a poor sinful worm of the dust, who can in no way be profitable to my Maker. Blessed be thy name! thou hast been the God of my forefathers for generations back; thou also wast the God of my dear parents, and now I desire to take a renewed hold of thee, as my covenant God, Father, Friend, and all-sufficient portion for time and eternity, pleading thy covenant strength, to enable me to be faithful to thee, that my deceitful heart may not turn me aside from the way of thy commandments. Glorify thy great Name in me, and by me, in life or death! To me at this time to live may it be Christ, or to die unspeakable gain. I devote my husband, my all, into thy faithful hands; accept my poor offering, as it is my all, and seal me to the day of eternal redemption; and all the praise shall be to the glory of thy great Name, through Jesus Christ, world without end. Amen."

"December 15.

"I would, with all my powers, glorify thee, most gracious God, for the great mercy thou hast made me a partaker of, in midst of great danger; but, O!

my depraved heart continually departs from thee, the alone fountain of living waters; and, alas! I find that when I would do good, evil is present with me. It is because thou art God, and not man, that I am not consumed before thee. O Lord, thou alone knowest my great ingratitude, at a period when thy unspeakable goodness demanded my highest praises; but do thou, in infinite condescension, accept of my desire to praise thee for all thy gifts to me. I bless thee for my little daughter, and for my own established health and strength; graciously enable me to devote my prolonged life to thy service. This is what I would desire; but knowing my innate depravity, and frequent mournful departures from thee, I rely alone on the promised strength of my blessed Redeemer to enable me thus to live to thy honour and glory. Accept, O Lord, my dedication of my dear little one to thee; she is thy gift; O make her thine for ever. I do on her behalf take a renewed hold of thine everlasting covenant—well ordered in all things, and sure. Heavenly Father, be her Father; blessed Jesus, be her Saviour; Holy Spirit, be thou her Sanctifier; she is not mine, but thine. O thou Three-One God, if thou art pleased to take her away early in life, I desire to take the comfort of having thus dedicated her to thee; and if she is spared, make her a rich partaker of all thy covenant blessings; and to thee, O thou blessed Three-One God, shall be the eternal glory, for ever and ever! To thee alone I look for grace,

and strength, and 'the wisdom that cometh from above,' to direct her father and me in the discharge of every parental duty. Who, O Lord, 'is sufficient for these things?' Our strength must come from thee alone; for we of ourselves can do nothing aright. But ever to be adored Jehovah! the riches of thy free grace, treasured up in thy everlasting covenant, contain all that unworthy but believing parents stand in need of for themselves and the dear objects of their affections. Help us, O Lord, to improve this inestimable privilege, and to derive from it that direction and support we shall stand in need of, in every duty and trial of life! Reign supreme, O Lord, in our affections; enable us ever to live to thy praise and glory; graciously prepare us and all our friends for enjoying thee for ever above, where neither sin nor sorrow shall ever separate us from thee, or from each other, through the blessed ages of eternity; and to thee, Father, Son, and ever blessed Spirit, shall be all the praise, now and for ever! Amen."

"GREENOCK, May 4, 1818.

"Blessed God, the tongue of men or angels can never express the gratitude I owe to thee, the gracious Giver of all Good! In infinite condescension, accept of this feeble attempt to praise thee for all thy wonderful kindness to me ever since thou broughtest me into existence up to the present hour. In a very particular manner I would praise thee, for restoring

our dear child to returning health from the very gates of death: also for the strong support thou didst afford me in the view of her being taken from me. The entire resignation experienced was all thine own work. Glorify thy great name, heavenly Father, in me, and by me, through the powerful operation of thy good Spirit. And I would take this as a token for good, that thou wilt stand by me and strengthen me in the trial immediately before me, as thou didst on a former occasion; and O grant me, in addition to all thy former kindness, that I may experience more gratitude than I have ever done. Thou hast graciously caused me to rest upon thy promise—that as my day is so shall my strength be.

'My sure and all-sufficient help
Is in Jehovah's name;
His name who did the heaven create,
And who the earth did frame.'

Therefore to me to live may it be Christ, or to die unspeakable gain; and God grant I may enjoy a sweet and comfortable taste of the truly precious sermon delivered by our dear faithful pastor on our last communion Sabbath. May I hear the blessed Jesus saying to me with power, in the language of the text, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death;' and through his all-prevailing name I shall ascribe to thee all glory, now and for ever."

"GREENOCK, 1818.

"O thou blessed Spirit, guide my thoughts while I attempt to praise a Three-One God, through Jesus Christ, for all his kindness to me, an unworthy sinner, which has, indeed, been wonderful, in giving me a little son, and in preserving him for nearly four weeks in good health, and for the supporting tender mercy I then experienced. It was, indeed, far more than I had asked or thought. I firmly believe the great Intercessor within the vail did graciously hear some of his believing people's prayers on my behalf, and gave efficacy to them by his precious atoning blood, for him the Father heareth always. I bless thee for restoring my dear Ann to perfect health, and that my children enjoy this great blessing, when so many around us are on beds of sickness. I desire to stand prepared for our day of trial also; and as a gracious means of preparation for it, I rejoice that in the day of health and strength, I am allowed to devote my dear husband, myself, and little ones to thee, in the good hope of being heard and graciously received, through Jesus Christ, the Son of thy love."

"I desire, O Lord, to humble myself in the dust before thee, on this last Sabbath of the year. In reviewing the past, I find that mine iniquities have gone over mine head as the waves of the sea, in which I would perish, and that eternally, were it not

that thou hast most graciously been pleased to reveal in thy blessed word the glorious method of salvation to the chief of sinners, through the precious blood of Christ. To this alone I look for pardon and acceptance, for sanctification and redemption."

"GREENOCK, 1820.

"O Lord, I would this night again record thy faithfulness, loving kindness, and tender mercies which have been experienced by me since I last wrote; and I would wonder and adore, for thy goodness is, indeed, infinite. I would bless thee for my three dear little ones, and the good health they all enjoy; but, above all, that thou allowest me to plead the promise on their behalf: 'All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children;' also that sweet promise in Malachi: 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.' Now, O blessed God, I beseech thee, give them grace to plead with thee for the fulfilment of these gracious promises, if thou art pleased to spare them to the years of understanding, that they may be taught by thy Spirit that they only can be made partakers of the special blessings contained in them by their individually pleading and claiming them for themselves; and to thee, holy Father, through Christ, shall be all the glory!"

"GREENOCK, 12th February 1822.

"I have had these ten days a cold, which has had rather a threatening aspect, and thou, O Lord, only knowest whether I shall ever recover from it or not; but I desire to put myself unreservedly into thy gracious hands, knowing no will but thine; and do thou, for thy glorious name's sake, grant that to me to live may be Christ, or to die, gain! I would now anew bless and adore thee for all thy special kindness to me and my family in time past; and I rejoice in the great privilege of being allowed to trust in thee for the time to come. Thou knowest best what is good for us; prepare us for all thy holy will, and save us in any way thou pleasest, only give us all grace and strength, according to our time of need; and all the glory shall be to a redeeming God and Saviour for ever and for ever! Amen."

"GREENOCK, March 17, 1822.

"Having been again allowed to renew my covenant with thee yesterday at thy holy table, O my God! I desire to look back and recal my exercise of mind there, in order to strengthen my faith, perhaps in future darkness and affliction, or in the hour of death. Come, therefore, O thou Holy Spirit, guide my heart and pen, and bless these few lines for this important end! Say, then, O my soul, what was thy greatest grief at the table of the Lord? It was this body of sin and death, that so often wounds my

Saviour, robs him of the glory which is due to him, dishonours my God, and turns my best actions into sin. What were the graces most earnestly desired by thee? They were sincerity and humility, a right heart, and a new hold of God as my God, Jesus as my Saviour, the Holy Spirit as my sanctifier, comforter, and guide to heaven. Relying wholly on thy strength, O my God, I devoted myself and all that is mine, to thy service, which is perfect freedom. Accept, O Lord, this dedication, and make thy grace every way sufficient for me, and perfect thy strength in my utter weakness; and I shall esteem it my highest honour and greatest happiness if thou wilt condescend to glorify thyself in me, or by me, in any way thou pleasest. O bless my dear husband, and dear little ones, and enable them to make an entire surrender of themselves to thee; and may we so live as to have the cheering hope that we all shall meet, and spend, in thy immediate presence, a glorious eternity together! Trusting alone in promised grace, I subscribe my name,

"ANN JOHNSTONE."

These extracts show the intense breathings of her soul for the spiritual life and health of herself, her husband, and dear little ones, and how frequently she took by faith a new and unshaken hold of the well-ordered covenant, with all its promises, privileges, and blessings, in her own behalf and theirs, particularly at the table of the Lord, where she

often was made to taste, as the banner of love was extended over her, that all his fruit was sweet to her renewed and longing desires. She experienced much delight in looking forward to this feast; and was much engaged in seeking at the throne of grace the preparation of heart that would enable her to observe the ordinance in a suitable frame of mind, carefully arranging all domestic affairs, that no duty might be neglected, while every hindrance, if possible, might be removed, that was likely to interpose any obstacle to her personal attendance or spiritual comfort. In this the gracious Lord, whose service she so much loved, granted her heart's wish, affording her, for many years, the opportunity of regularly attending, whenever the ordinance of the Supper was dispensed, both at Glasgow and Port-Glasgow, as well as at Greenock. All who had the pleasure of her intimate Christian fellowship, will remember the singular tenderness, humility, and holiness of her whole deportment after those seasons of holy communion. One could not be near her without perceiving that she had been on the mount with God, that sin had been subdued, the Divine image in the soul brightened, and every grace of the Spirit called into lively exercise by renewed discoveries of the character of God, and the unutterable preciousness and suitableness of the work of Christ.

Her sister—who generally accompanied her to those wells of spiritual refreshment, and who also thirsted eagerly for communion with God in his

ordinances, was so struck with Mrs Johnstone's progress in grace, that she often said she wondered that her sister was so long out of heaven, and that it must be for the good of others that she was detained from partaking of the full enjoyment of the beatific vision.

But it was not at communion feasts merely that she consecrated herself, soul, body, and spirit, to the Lord. This was her daily exercise. When walking with the writer of these pages, and conversing on those subjects which were ever uppermost in her thoughts—the cross of Christ, and the wonders of redeeming love—she would remark in a tone of solemn and reverential feeling, there is not an object we are passing, but I have taken to witness again and again, that I have avouched the Lord to be my God, claiming the covenant promise—"I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," for myself, my dear husband, and every one of our dear children, putting a blank into his hand, as to whatever may be his holy will regarding us, saying, "save us in any way thou pleasest, only make us what thou wouldst have us to be, that we may glorify thee now, and enjoy thee for ever." Then, looking at the majestic scenery by which we were surrounded, she would exclaim, "all his works praise him. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches. This is a beautiful world, even under the curse; what will the new heavens and the new earth be, wherein dwelleth

righteousness." Then she would say, "much as I love my husband, children, relatives, and christian friends, were the Bridegroom's voice to be heard this night, summoning me to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, if my wicked heart deceive me not, O how cheerfully would I leave them all to go into the bride-chamber, to be for ever with the Lord; to behold, without a veil, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and serve him without sin!" Astonished, sometimes, at the holy elevation of her spirit, and animation of her countenance, as she expatiated on the blessedness of being for ever free from sin, from all wandering thoughts, temptations, and every tendency to evil; of singing, without weariness or end, the song of Moses and the Lamb, the writer would reply: "But I hope you will be long spared to serve and glorify Him in the church on earth, ere you are called to the perfect worship of the church above." "Well," she would answer, "He knows what is best; and my desire is to know no will but His; it is my desire to live in habitual readiness for His coming; not unwilling to leave all His present gifts, that I may be absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

Mrs Johnstone always enumerated among her most precious means of spiritual instruction, the ministry of her beloved pastor, the late Rev. Dr Scott, which she long enjoyed and highly prized, particularly the discourses he preached for many years every alternate Wednesday forenoon. She would

say, "he frequently seemed to be allowed to catch a glimpse, as it were, within the vail, as the spirit of grace and supplication was largely poured out upon him, when he brought us to the mercy-seat, where grace reigns, and with a fluency and copiousness of expression peculiarly his own, made our requests known unto God, carrying us, through our Advocate with the Father and glorious High Priest, into the holiest of all, that we might receive those gracious communications which would prepare us for entering His glorious presence in heaven. Then he exhibited in a manner peculiarly convincing and attractive the doctrines of the cross, unfolding to the eye of faith the dignity and glory of the person of Christ, the nature and perfections of God, as seen in Him in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells, setting forth what debtors we are to sovereign kindness, and proving from the word of truth, the suitableness to our utter helplessness and spiritual destitution, of all the offices which Christ sustains, as well as of all the relations in which he is revealed."

She often spoke of the remarkable blessing which flows from sanctified affliction, as eminently qualifying her pastor to direct and comfort many in their day of distress, by pointing them to the fountain of consolation from which he had been enabled to draw all his support, under manifold, continued, and complicated trials. She would say: "Dear Dr Scott has been called to drink largely of the cup of affliction, but in the school of experience and of Christ, 'he

has learned in whatsoever state he is therewith to be content;' like his blessed Master, 'learning obedience by the things he has suffered;'" and would go on to observe, "Ministers who are faithful need not expect to escape trial and suffering, for the scripture has it: 'And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.'"

Many have had to bless God because of the trials of this honoured servant of the cross, by which he was enabled to become to them, in an eminent degree, the son of consolation, as he experimentally ministered to them, from the holy oracles, the rich spiritual cordials, with which, through the Divine Spirit, he had himself been so abundantly sustained in his time of need.

CHAPTER III.

Her active benevolence—Delight in Sabbath-school instruction—Maternal associations—Disapproval of worldly amusements—Care of domestics—Family worship—Good servants numbered among her grounds of thanksgiving—Her interest in the conversion of the Jews—Tract distribution—Female benevolent society—Visits to the poor and afflicted—Attention to family duties—Early devotion—Delight in observing nature—Views on affliction—Feelings under the death of an aunt, and the supposed death of her son.

MRS JOHNSTONE ever regarded time as the great talent which includes all others, and was, therefore, deeply concerned that its fragments might be gathered up, so that, if possible, not a moment should be lost, but employed in some way for that Lord, who said, in bestowing the talent, "Occupy till I come." Her husband's frequent absence, while it exercised her faith and patience, afforded opportunity for devoting both time and personal labour to the various benevolent and religious institutions of her native town, with the greater number of which, she was in some way connected. For many years she superintended and taught a class, on Sabbath evenings, in the School of Industry, where, through the Divine blessing on her tuition, many "trees of righteousness, the planting

of the Lord" were reared, that afterwards were seen as green olives growing up in the house of God. Not a few of the young ladies who assisted in teaching the different classes, as well as the children, have acknowledged, with lively gratitude, their obligations for the benefit derived from her instructions, and the part she took in conducting the devotional exercises. Some who have long adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour, by a conversation becoming the gospel, have declared that their first religious impressions were received, while under Mrs Johnstone's care at this period; and she herself often said, when referring to her personal enjoyment and enlargement of soul experienced in her duties at the Sabbath school, that the Lord manifested himself as a liberal master, as these exercises were frequently made to her among the sweetest hours she spent on that holy day.

Having a special love and tender care for the young and rising generation, as the heirs and hopes of the church's privileges, she gladly lent her aid to every plan that appeared scriptural, and likely to promote their benefit. Accordingly, she was among the first to enter with spirit into active measures for the formation of maternal associations. Solemnly impressed with her responsibility as a mother, having children committed to her care to train for immortality, and deeply convinced of the great wisdom and kindness which have kindled the love that glows in the mother's heart towards the children God has given her, and the consequent powerful influence this

has, when sanctified, in drawing the infant's best affections, not merely to the mother, the first object of its love, but to that Saviour, who in the days of his flesh said, "Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not;" she was most anxious that mothers would unite in seeking first their own personal salvation, and then the spiritual life of their beloved offspring, feeling as she did that they could never appreciate, in any degree, the inestimable value of the souls of their children, nor labour suitably for their good, till they knew something of the infinite worth of their own, and availed themselves of the ransom paid for their own redemption.

As a believing mother, her desire was to sing of the mercies of the Lord as long as she lived, to train her children to take up the song, and continue it when she was gone to sing it in heaven; and she wished others to join with her in making known his faithfulness to all generations, assuring their children that they had found God true to all his covenant promises, in order that they might learn to put their trust in him for themselves individually. And she had the satisfaction of being instrumental in forming the first Maternal Association, it is believed, which was instituted in Scotland. At the united and earnest solicitation of its members, Mrs Johnstone became its president, which office she held, to the special benefit and encouragement of all the members, up to the day of her death, a period of more than twelve years.

Perhaps few things in which her active benevolence induced her to take an interest for the good of the young, received more signally than did this measure, the Divine countenance. It sent streams of spiritual life and vigour into many families; and she had soon the joy of hearing that, in a quiet, unobtrusive way, those little praying bands of mothers were spreading, in many parts of our own, and other lands, proving the humble, but blessed means, in not a few instances, of counteracting those worldly usages which threatened to abolish family religion altogether, or to render it a wearisome formality.

Mrs Johnstone had great pleasure in looking at groups of little children, as they were going to, or coming from school, a sight she was often gratified with in her daily labours of love, as she passed through a locality where a number of schools were situated. She used to remark, I never see the little children with their buoyant, happy, playful spirits, without powerfully feeling the spirit of prayer in their behalf, constraining me to cry, Oh, Lord Jesus, put thy gracious hands on every one of them, that they may receive the spirit of adoption, and be set apart for thyself, that they may all witness for thee, in their several lots, and, if it be thy will to spare them, become so many qualified missionaries of thy cross; teach them to come to thee with their supplications, that they may receive thy instructions, and be made to know how welcome they are to thy throne of grace with their hosannas.

It was the opinion of some, even of the godly, that Mrs Johnstone carried her views as to restraining children from worldly amusements, too far. In reply to manifold and plausible reasonings, after endeavouring to prove that her sentiments coincided with the spirit of scripture, *the Christian's only rule*, she uniformly said, "Well I cannot tell how far any of my children, after they grow up, may go into the amusements of the world, or what liberties they may take in countenancing its fashions, but I know it will be on their own responsibility if they do. Parents must render an account how they have done their duty, and children how they have done theirs; but no child of mine shall have to rise up at the judgment-seat, and accuse me of being the instrument of leading him into temptation."

She had a watchful and tender care over her domestics, as well as her children, habitually observing the ordinance of family worship, evening and morning, in the absence of her husband; nor did she confine her prayers with, and for her children and domestics to those stated times; it being her practice never to allow any particular providence to pass without endeavouring to improve it to their mutual advantage; thus turning even the ordinary occurrences of the day into occasions of profitable instruction, and using, with much winning and affectionate entreaty, every means for calling attention to the one thing needful. In this manner she showed that grace was with her in lively exercise, and that "the love of

Christ shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," was the regulating principle to which all things were subordinated.

She classed among her mercies, the special kindness of the Lord in providing for her good servants. She would say, "from how many trials, to which others have been subjected with domestics, have I been delivered! In looking for servants, they have always been asked from the Lord, and I have tasted the sweetness of receiving them into my family, as gifts sent from him in answer to prayer." From this it was to be expected they would prove, in their station, blessings and comforts to the family into which they were admitted. Nor was she put to the pain or inconvenience of many changes, her servants remaining with her many years, devoted, faithful, and attached members of her household.

Being in her closet and family, as well as in the social circle, one of "the Lord's remembrancers, who keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," she took great delight in hearing of missionary efforts and success, and was ever ready to aid those exertions which seek to carry into effect the grand design of Christ's mission and obedience unto the death, for the salvation of perishing sinners.

From prayerfully comparing Old Testament predictions and promises with the New Testament record and promises, concerning God's ancient Israel, she believed that as their "fall was the riches of the

world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, so their fulness would be as life from the dead;" and such was the spirit of prayer excited in her with regard to the long-neglected, long-rejected Jews, that often, for nights together, she could not sleep, pleading the promises for their restoration, that the veil might be taken away in the reading of the Old Testament, and that they might see that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. The subject continuing to press upon her mind, as she thought of the whole past history of the Jews, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came;" and also of the influence which their in-gathering, according to prophecy, will have in hastening the glory of the latter day,—she communicated to her beloved pastor, and some other christian friends, her views on this subject, and meeting with a warm response from them, and finding that their minds had been similarly moved by the same subject, she was thus the instrument of leading to the formation of the Female Association in Greenock in behalf of the Jews, a society in which she never ceased to take a lively interest.

She was also long engaged in tract distribution, visiting a district from house to house; and laboured for many years, as one of the most steady and active agents, both as a visitor and superintendent of the Ladies' Female Benevolent Society.

The writer, speaking on one occasion of Mrs Johnstone to a friend, she mentioned that at one time, she visited along with her, a poor district in Greenock, when she remarked to her companion: "What would I give Mrs Johnstone, for your talent in speaking to people on spiritual things!" The answer was most characteristic, and full of useful instruction: "Oh, my dear, I can do nothing; but I never go into the house of a poor person, without secretly saying, O Lord, be thou a mouth and wisdom to me."

The valuable labours which she gave daily to these public objects, were but a small part of her exertions. The poor, the sick, the afflicted of all ranks whom she knew, or to whom she could by any means find access, shared largely in her sympathy and attentions, and many a widow and fatherless heart did she make to sing for joy, by ministering to them the needed consolation.

In the spirit of the blessed High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of all his people's infirmities, she esteemed it a precious privilege "to weep with those that weep," as well as "to rejoice with those that rejoice." The mental conflict through which she passed in early life, qualified her for directing and dealing with individuals in distress of mind, in whose case she always felt a peculiar interest; nor did lengthened affliction, arising from whatever cause, ever exhaust her patience, or weary her attempts to alleviate it, as far as it was in her power. Some of the individuals whom she visited weekly were confined for a long period of years. One of those

"poor in this world, but rich in faith, an heir of the kingdom," suffered on a bed of languishing for sixteen years, and during all that time she was constantly ministering to his own and his family's necessities, *ever considering herself the debtor*, having in her eye the astonishing words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it to me." Often she spoke of the privilege enjoyed at the bedside of this child of God, and would say, "as I ascended the stair to visit him, every step seemed to raise me higher above the world, and as soon as I entered his apartment, a purer atmosphere was breathed, the Divine fellowship, 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory' was experienced, while he talked of the boundless love and mercy shown to him, 'Jehovah hearing him in the day of trouble, sending strength from the sanctuary;' and though he walked in the midst of trouble, he was revived by the sweet cordials of the word, brought by the promised Remembrancer, in such suitableness to his case, as made him feel that the fiery furnace, although 'seven times heated,' was converted into an antepast of heaven, because Jesus, in his spiritual presence, was realised there."

"O the important lesson," she would say, "to be learned in visiting such monuments of the Divine loving kindness! 'Vanity and vexation of spirit' are seen to be stamped upon all created things; the world, with its deceptive shadows, rolls away, and the substantial realities of an unseen and eternal world

open to faith's eye in all their magnitude and duration!"

There was at all times a number of the children of affliction, whose cases she felt it her duty specially to attend to, ever rejoicing if allowed, in any degree, to relieve or comfort either the body or the mind.

Nor were any home-duties neglected in consequence of her manifold labours abroad. Seldom going into company, and requiring less sleep than most people, she was able to secure a large portion of time for her duties as a mother, and as the mistress of a household. Being in the habit of rising early in the morning, she generally spent some hours in reading and devotional exercises, which gave a spiritual tone to her mind throughout the whole of the subsequent engagements of the day.

From the situation of Willow Park, her bedroom window commanded a view of the rising sun, which she had great delight in observing as it emerged from behind the dark mountains, and poured its flood of light upon the surrounding landscape. The whole book of nature was to her a constant source of enjoyment, as she possessed the happy faculty of drawing a pious lesson from every object on which the eye fell, thus making it appear to those with whom she conversed, what beautiful harmony exists between the word and the works of God, and proving that they proceed from the same glorious Author, and are designed to explain and shed light upon each other; "for the invisible things of Him are clearly

seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." It was her sweet privilege to perceive and enjoy a reconciled God and Father in everything he has made, as well as in all he has revealed of himself in his holy oracles, and in the face of him "who is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

She would often say, "O how delightful to contemplate Him, 'who though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich!' as the God of creation, 'upholding all things by the word of his power;' as the God of providence, having the government upon his shoulders, arranging and controlling all events for his own glory and the good of his church; and as the God of grace, 'who having made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness,' ascended up on high, 'and received gifts for men, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.'" "The belief that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, sitting King upon his holy hill in Zion," she would say, with a countenance radiant with the "joy and peace in believing," by which the God of hope was filling the soul, "is a wall against a thousand distressing doubts and fears, even under the darkest aspect of his providence, both as regards ourselves, and the interests of the visible church; for even, 'when clouds and darkness are round about him, we know that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' Amid the most gloomy, trying,

and perplexing dispensations, "This," she would add, "ought to be enough for us; infinite wisdom cannot err, and infinite love will only do that which will most conduce to the advancement of his kingdom of grace within us and around us. Then," she would observe, with an expression of warmth indicating heart-felt experience, "there is a blessed communion enjoyed with God in his providence, as well as in his ordinances. But, oh! this Divine communion is a sensitive thing; a single wrong look may deprive us of it. How careful, then, should we be to watch unto prayer, and to guard our own spirits, that no temper of mind be cherished that may grieve or vex the Holy Spirit, and cause his gracious motions to be withdrawn or withheld!" She would then, with affectionate entreaty, urge the duty of receiving, mixed with faith, and of treasuring up in the memory, those truths that make wise unto salvation, as the materials by which the Holy Spirit enlightens, renews, and sanctifies the soul, at the same time that he glorifies Christ, by taking of the things that are his, and showing them unto us. "Oh, let us cultivate," she would say, "those dispositions which are the fruit of the Spirit's gracious operations, laying open our whole souls to his benign influences. Let us be careful to acknowledge and honour the work of the Spirit, as we lose a great deal by not being sufficiently alive to this, and by not having due conceptions of the love, the amazing love and condescension of the Spirit, in coming

into such hearts, as ours, and making them his temples."

By the holy Spirit's teaching, she had a singular clearness of spiritual perception as to the part which each of the persons of the glorious Godhead sustains and executes in the scheme of man's redemption. All those enjoying her intimate christian fellowship, felt that she possessed the talent of distinctly setting forth the abundant mercy of the Father, shown in his great love wherewith he loved us, as the fountain whence salvation proceeded; the love of the Son in undertaking and executing his plan, by which all the attributes of Deity were harmonised, and the moral government of God sustained, while mercy, as a boundless ocean of love, rolls towards the chief of sinners, through the blood of Jesus; and the astonishing wisdom of the operations and love of the Spirit, in rendering efficacious the glorious purposes according to which the whole was arranged in the counsels of eternity.

But, she would exclaim, O how little do we know, and how feeble are all our conceptions, of this wondrous plan, "which angels desire to look into," which brings glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men. For now we see through a glass darkly; and when the finite attempts to grasp the Infinite, we feel what poor "creatures of yesterday we are, and that indeed we know nothing." We may apprehend, but never can comprehend, the infinite Jehovah.

Living as she did, continually under the influence of the world to come,—feeling sin to be the greatest, the only burden, she used to rejoice whenever she heard of the departure of any of those, who, she was persuaded, had died in the Lord, and was in the habit of giving out for songs of praise at little female meetings, in such circumstances, either the 59th, 65th, or 66th Paraphrases, each of which seemed to express the breathings of her soul. The thought sometimes occurred—would Mrs Johnstone be equally willing to part with a near and dear relative, who she had reason to believe on good grounds had gone to glory? An opportunity of observing her state of mind under the bereavement of loved connexions, was again and again afforded, during the last few years of her life.

A beloved aunt, who had been an object of tender affection, because of her christian spirit, and her uniform, cheerful, and happy temper, and who had shown something akin to a mother's love for Mrs Johnstone, and her brothers and sisters, from the time when they were deprived of the tender care of their own excellent mother, was suddenly removed, having been in her usual health the previous day. Having called to inquire for Mrs Johnstone, on hearing of the unlooked-for dispensation, I found her feelingly alive to the pain of separation, while the song of grateful praise was filling her heart for the Lord's kindness. She instantly began to enumerate his manifold mercies, in having given such a relative, in sparing her so long, in granting her so much content-

ment and cheerfulness, together with the use of all her faculties to advanced years; above all, for what rich and free grace had made her, in living and in dying, and for her peaceful and happy departure,—her last words being, "goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Her's was a happy old age; she was satisfied with length of days, and she was cut down as a sheaf of corn ripe for the sickle. Then she spoke of the language of the dispensation, and how we should seek, through the blessing of the Supreme Disposer, to improve it, "that we might ever be found as servants waiting for our Lord's coming, knowing it to be the voice of our Beloved leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, saying, 'It is I, be not afraid;' and that our souls may respond, 'Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us.'"

Sometime after this, a providence occurred which strikingly illustrated her cheerful and entire submission of will to that of her heavenly Father. On the Monday after a communion Sabbath, as she was going into church, her husband, who had been in town before her, came up to her at the moment she had reached the church door, and with considerable agitation said, "I have just received a letter announcing the death of our dear James." That being the name of their eldest son, who was then at a boarding academy in Liverpool, she naturally thought it was he, and inquired when and how it

had taken place. Her husband replied, he had not yet got particulars. Turning as if she would return home, Mr Johnstone took hold of her hand, and said, "Let us go into church." She followed, thinking her husband was taking the right way to obtain direction and comfort, as David, under bereavement, went up to the house of the Lord. She said nothing to her children, nor to her beloved sister and family, sitting around in the same pew, but drawing her veil over her face, she felt relieved by the tears flowing. During the period of both sermons, her mind was quieted and sustained by a variety of scripture texts, bringing before her the sovereignty of God; and she was still, knowing that it was God who had done it, that it belongs to him to do as seems good unto him with the creatures he has made, and that as the Judge of all the earth, he can only do that which is right. She was enabled to call to her remembrance the faith and instant obedience of Abraham, when called to offer up his Isaac, the child of promise; the case of Aaron, who held his peace when his two sons were cut off, under circumstances so distressing; and that of Job, who, when his sons and daughters, and all that he possessed, were suddenly removed, said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Often did she instruct others by the lessons which on that day she learned from those aspects of truth, and from the examples of those holy men of old, that were suggested to her. But what raised her above present

circumstances and feelings, and enabled her to retire from the house of God composed and strengthened, to intimate with a calmness that astonished them, first to her sister, and then to her family, the tidings, as she fully believed, of her son's death, was the passage brought with sweet power to her heart, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" When Mr Johnstone returned to his home, it was found that a mistake had taken place. It was not the death of his son he had received accounts of, but that of a beloved brother of the same name, who had been twenty years abroad. Mrs Johnstone often referred to the exercises of mind experienced on that occasion, saying that thereby she was enabled to enter into the case of bereaved parents, understanding somewhat of the anguish of the pangs of separation, and the suitableness of the Divine word, in its abundant sources of consolation. Not having known the trial of the death of a child, she would say, "God gave me to taste something of its bitterness, and how he could, by his word and Spirit, sustain me under it; and still he has given me back my son. O that he might live before God!"

CHAPTER IV.

Her delight in attending a female fellowship meeting—Her interest in widows—The maternal association—Death of her husband—His growth in grace prior to his decease—The state of her mind under her bereavement—Communion with a covenant God—Mercy in judgment—Sabbath-school teaching resumed—Attention to congregational societies—Solicitude for the spiritual well-being of her sons—Favourite topics of spiritual converse—Inward groanings.

Mrs Johnstone experienced much delight in attending a weekly fellowship meeting, on the Friday forenoon; and although it was held at a considerable distance from her place of residence, the stormiest day in winter never prevented her from being present. Even when she had strangers residing under her roof, rather than be deprived of the privilege, she would take from sleep the time required, in order to make necessary arrangements for their comfort. She would say to the other members of the fellowship meeting,—we must allow nothing but what conscience, enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, can approve, to prevent our attendance. We have voluntarily devoted the time to wait upon God, claiming the character and promises annexed, of those "who fear the Lord, and speak often one to

another," and confiding in his gracious declaration: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And if we would be ashamed to allow any trifling difficulty, or little inconvenience, to hinder us from keeping our engagement with a friend, if he had invited us, and we had promised to wait upon him, how much more so when it is the Holy One of Israel who has called us to the mount of prayer and spiritual fellowship with himself! Her regularity tended to cheer and encourage all the other members, several of whom, as well as herself, have been taken into the presence chamber of the King, at whose right hand is "fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore." All of these, before leaving this world, acknowledged with lively gratitude, that some of the happiest hours of their life had been spent at that little meeting, where so many Bethel and Peniel seasons had been graciously realised; where the beauty, and harmony, and boundless excellence of revealed truth, were seen, while turning up corresponding passages, and comparing scripture with scripture; and where, while engaged in united supplication and spiritual conference, a light was shed upon the word of God, and upon his work in the soul, confirming and increasing faith, and quickening all the motions of that life which springs from union to him, "who is the resurrection and the life." Mrs Johnstone was the fourth of those kindred spirits, that for many years met on the forenoon of that day every week,

who declared on their dying beds that they had found that fellowship meeting a well of special spiritual refreshment, whereby their drooping hearts had been revived, and many clusters of the first-fruits of the Spirit received, which had made them long for the full vintage in the heavenly Canaan.

Mrs Johnstone was equally punctual in her attendance at all the mothers' meetings, both weekly, monthly, and quarterly. At one of the monthly meetings, a widow gave out for prayerful consideration, during the coming month, this passage: "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me." A young widow present, who had been lately and suddenly bereaved of the husband of her youth, and left with the care of two little boys, appeared so affected by the reading of the passage, that it was some time ere she could be composed. Another member remarked, perhaps it may be too much for the feelings of some of the widows to take up this passage; when the one who had given it replied: "What would have become of such as me, and the other widows, were it not for such a portion of scripture as this, and its parallel passages?" Mrs Johnstone entered with much tender sympathy into this view, saying, "Oh, yes, let us take it up; it is right every one should have her portion of meat in due season. We come together to wait upon the Lord—'to consider one another—to provoke unto love and good works,'—to obtain strength for duty and for trial. We meet as

wives and mothers, having a community of feeling and of interest in each other's difficulties, duties, and trials, 'that we may bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;' and we who have our husbands spared, know not who may be the first to find the precious suitableness of this very passage to ourselves, by our being numbered among the widows, and by our children being written fatherless."

When the day arrived for united prayerful converse, on the passage already cited, none entered into the subject with more apparent experimental life, or seemed to have a higher zest for it than Mrs Johnstone, although her husband was then in the vigour and prime of life, and seemed likely, to human calculation, to enjoy prolonged days. It was a day never to be forgotten by all present, every thing conspiring to solemnise, and call into exercise tender feeling. It was the last time the meeting was to be held in that place where the little association had been formed, and where so many seasons of the divine fellowship in love had been enjoyed, because of the removal to another town of the member by whom the house was occupied. Mrs Johnstone conducted the first part of the devotional services, and took an animated share in the whole of the exercises, which were blessed by the Spirit of all grace, for carrying the soul on the wing of faith upwards, and forwards, to that glorious state, where the winter of time, with its oft dark and troubled sky, shall, along with sin,

sorrow, sickness, and death, have for ever passed away, and where no shades of night fall, nor clouds gather, to obscure the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The tears were streaming from every eye in the room, and it was found to be a season of sanctified and hallowed renewing of "the kindness of youth, and love of espousals" with him who declares, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Mrs Johnstone delighted to recall, with grateful praise, the remarkable unction from the Holy One given on that occasion; and indeed all seemed to have felt it a sweet prelibation of joys to come—a precious means of preparation for being called to "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

A short time only elapsed ere Mr Johnstone's health began to decline, and Mrs Johnstone herself was the first of that little company of wives and mothers who was called to part with the affectionate husband of her youth, and the tender-hearted father of her dear children.

The immediate cause of Mr Johnstone's death, which took place on the 29th March 1837, was an injury which he received on the head, from coming suddenly in contact with a piece of scaffolding in St Andrew's Church, Greenock, while it was in process of erection.

Some months previous to his decease, he suffered severe paroxysms of pain in the head, which was a touching trial of faith and patience to his partner as well as to himself. But even this night of affliction

was illumined with peculiar brightness, by the work of grace shining forth with a fulness and vividness, which proved how entirely his affections were weaned from earthly things, and how rapidly he was advancing in meetness for the presence of God. He had, from love to his family, and kind concern for their comfort, procured a house and garden, beautifully situated, and provided with every convenience, and had been making improvements on the property every year, both for ornament and utility; yet he often said to his loving wife, as she watched with anxious solicitude the progress of his illness: "The house whose builder and maker is God will be far better. None can deprive us of our enjoyment of it; and sin, which so often hides from us the light of the Divine countenance, and by which Christ is so frequently wounded by us in the house of his friends, will, in those pure and holy mansions, be completely destroyed." It was her sweet privilege to witness in her husband, while under this trouble, patience "working experience, and experience hope,"—the discipline sanctified—sin and self mortified—the soul brought nearer to God, weaned from the world, and fitted for higher service. Believing views of the glory to be revealed supported and bore up, during this season of suffering, the spirits of both.

A remarkable humility and child-like sweetness of disposition were manifested by Mr Johnstone, as he drew towards the close of his earthly sojourn. Often with tears the faithful domestics spoke of this,

and of the gratitude expressed for the smallest services rendered to him. This was the case particularly with her who was most in attendance, acting as an attached sick-nurse, and who declared that it was a great privilege to wait upon him. As he was able, he delighted to hear the word of God either read or repeated; "opening his mouth wide," and panting earnestly for the bread and water of life—dwelling in prayerful desire before the throne of grace, and often entreating his beloved wife to pray with him.

Mrs Johnstone had the satisfaction to obtain her husband's cordial approval of all her views, with regard to its being the Christian's duty, "though in the world, to be living above it," and not to be conformed "either to its spirit, principles, or practices." Whatever individuals may think, in a day of health and prosperity, the important realities of eternity, opening upon the mind's eye as at hand, fill the soul with shame and sorrow that we have, in our generation, done so little for Christ, who has done so much for us. "From my present views," Mr Johnstone would say, "if I were to be spared, I would think every moment of time far too little to be wholly devoted to the cause and service of such a blessed Lord and Master."

From the effects of the blow Mr Johnstone had received on his head, he was unable to speak, or to know anything that passed around him, for some hours previous to his departure. But she, who was soon to be a widow, was divinely strengthened

and comforted in this hour of nature's keenest sorrow; she felt, as when "a holy solemnity is kept," by the promise being fulfilled in her blissful experience, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be;" and she was enabled to commend her beloved husband's departing spirit into the gracious hands of a redeeming God.

Many times she spoke of the evening after, when, for the first time, she, along with her household, met around the family altar, realising the full extent of her desolate widowed state, and of the subdued meltings of heart, and unutterable emotions by which the soul was filled, when claiming for herself and family the new and endearing relation in which the Lord was now revealing himself as Husband, Father, Master, Friend.

Soon after, when the writer was spending some time with her at Willow Park, she said, referring to that night: "As it was to nature a night the most gloomy and sad, so it was made to faith one of the sweetest and even joyful nights, as my covenant God came very near, discovering himself in the intimacies of that union which he had formed in days of early youth, when he said, 'I will betroth thee unto me once, and again, and a third time.' I felt that I would never have come into that relation to him, if he had not, by the power of his grace, betrothed me to himself; and by taking away my husband, he opened to me more of the nature of his covenant, as a marriage covenant founded in choice and love, and

showed me that he who says, 'Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called,' would indeed fulfil his promise, having given such abundant testimony to the power of his grace and Spirit in perfecting his work in the heart of my husband, whereby I have no cause to 'sorrow as those who have no hope.' He gave me also to feel that, as he had engaged to take care of my interest, and provide for all my wants, temporal and spiritual, so my only care must be to please him, seeking, by waiting his will, more fully to imbibe the spirit of his spouse; and," she added, "he is continuing to make good his promise, giving me from day to day to taste the blessedness of the privilege, described in the Song of Solomon: 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?'"

One could not be near her at this time without perceiving that the Divine life within had received a powerful impulse, that the beauty of holiness shone with increased loveliness, and that the principle which aims at being "holy as God is holy," was in lively exercise in all she said and did. The sweet smelling garments of the spotless righteousness of our exalted High Priest and King, by which she was adorned, diffused an odour refreshing to all about her.*

* It is to be regretted that she destroyed some papers she had written during this period. She used to say writing was not her talent, nor did it suit her habit of body, uniformly producing pain, both in the head and chest.

Requiring a good deal of exercise in the open air, she experienced both bodily and spiritual renovation, for some considerable time after Mr Johnstone's death, by resorting every fine morning to a hill at some distance from Willow Park, where, alone with God, in the midst of the beauties of his creation, she poured forth a full heart.

One lovely morning she invited the writer to accompany her, and said she would show the place which she had found as Pisgah—the mount of the Lord—where some glimpses of the glory of his person had been vouchsafed; where things unseen had been brought near; "and where the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," had been realised in such a manner as to raise her above present trials. As we ascended the hill, the mists were rising from the opposite mountains, and the sun was scattering his morning rays upon one of the finest and most extensive prospects to be found in the gorgeous scenery of the Clyde. She said, "Ah! how often, in this very spot, have the mists of unbelieving doubts and fears been chased away by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness! Our hearts are as hard as these mountains till he breaks them by the power of his word and Spirit, and implants the new principle of grace, which he refreshes and keeps alive, amid all the cold and damps by which it is surrounded, till it brings forth fruit unto life eternal."

She then went on to speak of the remarkable

manner in which the Lord had there communed with her from the mercy-seat, opening the treasures of his grace, unfolding the matchless and unchangeable nature of that love "which passeth knowledge"—the source and spring of all grace now received, and of all the glory which we are expecting: "Death has broken the earthly relation between me and my affectionate husband; but my God has revealed more of the nature and duration of his everlasting covenant. How often have I been unmindful of my covenant obligations! how many broken vows have I to mourn over! yet 'He is ever mindful of his covenant;' and in the infinite depths of his Divine compassion he is continuing to say, 'Turn, O backsliding children, for I am married unto you;' and without any reflection upon his justice—that being entirely satisfied by the Mediator of the covenant—He receives his backsliding children without one upbraiding look, restoring them to his favour and fellowship."

During each day of this favoured season of christian intercourse, it was evident the secret of the Lord was with her; that he was hiding her in his pavilion, setting her feet upon a rock, even the Rock of Ages. There was also an increased beauty of chastened expression reflected from her countenance that made one feel, in looking at her, how desirable is the comeliness of Christ, when even its effects, as seen in the external aspect, are so attractive. I remember taking notice of this in a letter written at this time to her two daughters, who were then at a boarding-

school in London, under the care of an excellent and devotedly pious lady, whose kind letters, breathing the most tender and considerate sympathy from her own experience of the "widow's God, as a very present help," proved a source of sweet consolation. Mrs Johnstone's daughters' letters also contained everything encouraging to a believing mother's heart, being filled chiefly with accounts of those passages of the Divine word by which they had been instructed and sustained, on hearing of the death of their beloved father, without being aware that from the same words the Holy Spirit had been, in the multitude of her thoughts within her, comforting and delighting their widowed mother's heart. In their absence, and in the valuable tuition they were enjoying, she saw much wisdom and loving-kindness. "All these ingredients," she would say, "are mixed in the dispensation by our heavenly Father; and I trust, by his blessing, will turn out to the spiritual advantage of all of us, by our being made more abundantly to drink of the cup of sanctified affliction;" and it was her privilege both to have this happiness realised in herself, and to witness it in them.

Not long after the death of her husband, Mrs Johnstone resumed her Sabbath-school teaching in the School of Industry, which for some years, while her family required her to spend more time on Sabbath evenings with them, she had seen it her duty to discontinue. Being ready to every good work, her concern was prayerfully to seek to know

the duty to which, in her particular circumstances, her Lord and Master was calling her, never hesitating as soon as this was made clear, instantly to engage in it, at whatever cost of personal inconvenience.

She devoted a large share of her attention to the many valuable institutions and meetings connected with the congregation to which she was united in visible membership, thus showing, by her example, that the claims of her family and congregation were not by any means to be superseded by her public duties. All who know something of her numerous engagements for the benefit of others, will cheerfully bear testimony to the admirable consistency of her arrangements, whereby all was so balanced that one class of duties was never sacrificed for the sake of another. Her "eye was single;" her motive and aim were one; a regard to the glory of God was the moving spring of all her undertakings.

Meeting with Mrs Johnstone only at intervals, during the six years of her widowed state, the writer was exceedingly struck with her progress in deep-toned spirituality and cheerfulness of spirit. She was wont to say when we met, "My blessed Lord so bears me up that I still feel like a cork floating upon the bosom of the waters, which cannot sink, the eternal God the refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms."

She continued to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," for her dear children as well

as herself, believing "all other things would be added thereto." Her maternal solicitude for the spiritual life of her sons was great. She intensely desired, and continued to pray without ceasing, that they might become the subjects of the Holy Ghost's regenerating power, and give evidence of being new creatures in Christ, by consecrating the strength of their years to his service. Having been enabled to lay hold of the promise made to Messiah concerning his seed, "and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," she pleaded the fulfilment of it in behalf of the children God had given her, saying, "although I should not live to see it, 'God is faithful who hath promised, who also will do it.'" It was her delight to ponder, and to speak of the precious privilege of being under the teaching of him who teacheth savingly and to profit, and she would say, O the comfort of such words, "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way!" and add, Oh that my children might hearken to his commandments, for then their peace would "be as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea!" They pass through an evil and ensnaring world, where many perils beset the path of youth; "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" and the great adversary is everywhere spreading his nets, endeavouring to entangle them by the most specious devices. When he would even dare to tempt the Son of God, and quote scripture in

support of his plausible temptations, what artful stratagems will he not put forth to beguile and lead away, from wisdom's pleasant and peaceful paths, our children and youth? Like Job, we would need to be exercising a godly jealousy over ourselves and them; and like him, daily to be offering sacrifice according to the number of them, for it is written, "Thus did Job continually." She spoke of the lessons taught by watching the spider weaving its web so dexterously for ensnaring and catching its prey, saying, If we are not careful to watch unto prayer, Satan will be sure to draw us into his cunningly-wrought traps, by which he lies in ambush, ready to surprise and seize his victims. The blessed Saviour, when assailed by him, could say, "The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me." How different is it with us—so many hidden traitors ever ready to open to the evil influences of a world lying in the wicked one! What need have we to pray, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes!" We must fight against those corruptions, and easily-besetting sins, that weaken the graces of the Spirit, and prevent them from coming to maturity. We should bring them to Christ, as his and our enemies, to be slain by the mighty power of his grace. Even "the little foxes," the very first motions of sin, should be destroyed, seeing that, if cherished, they will grow upon us, and prompt to those acts which bring forth death. We need, she would say, a new conversion

every day, crying, like the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" and she referred to the comfort and encouragement suggested by the words: "To whom coming," not merely having come to Christ, but to whom coming, every day, every hour, every moment anew, "for mercy to pardon, for grace to help."

Another subject she delighted to converse about was the tenderness of the good Shepherd to the lambs, in drawing them by "the cords of love"—in providing the tender grass whereby "the lambs feed after their manner." Young converts are generally favoured with such discoveries of the love of God in Christ, as fill the soul with esteem of the unrivalled excellence of Christ as the "chiefest among ten thousand;" and such a peculiar sweetness is tasted in all his appointed ordinances, that all relish for the company and sinful gratifications of this poor perishing world is completely taken away, and the pleasures and enjoyments of sense are seen to be *emptiness itself*, compared with those invisible realities which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." Christ's yoke they thus feel to be easy, and his burden to be light. She would then advert with touching tenderness to the days of youth, repeating a passage that had been made very precious to her: "When I found grace in the wilderness, the Lord appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." As we advance, she would say, in our pilgrimage, we

daily discover in the light of the cross more of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the mystery of iniquity within us, the extent and spirituality of the Divine law, our sinning and coming short of God's glory in every thing; we perceive that the christian life is indeed a warfare, a conflict, a fighting, all the way through the "good fight of faith;" and we find the need of seeking grace to comply with the injunctions: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God." We have many enemies to fight against, "for we wrestle not merely against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places;" and our encouragement, amid the painful struggle, comes from our having a good Captain to fight for, and his banner to fight under, so that we can say, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Mrs Johnstone mourned over weak faith, and cold affections; she groaned, being burdened with a body of remaining sin and corruption, as well as longed for the happiness of entire deliverance. The nearer she came to the blissful period of her emancipation, the more sensitively alive was her conscience, and the greater her fear of offending in thought, word, and deed; "forgetting those things which are behind, she reached forth to those things which are before;" not content with any present or former measures of grace, but aiming at higher and higher degrees of holiness of heart and life.

CHAPTER V.

Death of her sister—Care for the bereaved children—A believer's death—Rejoicing in the Lord—Communion seasons—And christian fellowship—Freedom from prejudice in hearing the gospel preached—Efforts to do good in travelling—Catholic spirit—Interest in the questions at issue between the contending parties in the Established Church—Visits to Bridewell—Effort to relieve the distressed operatives.

In the summer of 1840, nearly two and a half years before her own death, the only surviving sister of Mrs Johnstone was removed, after a painful illness of several months. Though differing in many respects as to their natural character and configuration of mind, a tender love existed between them, and from early life they had encouraged each other in the good ways of the Lord. While Mrs Johnstone deeply felt all her beloved sister suffered, she was grateful for the opportunity which she had of attending her sick and dying bed, and ministering as far as was in her power, to the comfort of body and soul. She esteemed it a sweet privilege to be so engaged, and accounted it angel's work. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" She had the joy of witnessing that the

trial of her sister's "faith was much more precious than of gold that perisheth," upheld as she was by succours drawn from the Divine word, amid the affliction of the body, the prospect of its dissolution, and the pangs of separation from her loved family, whom she was enabled to leave upon the care of "the Father of the fatherless," pleading that "the God who had fed her, and led her all her life long," would, when father and mother had forsaken them, take them up.

Mrs Johnstone cared for them, during the short period she survived her beloved sister, with all a mother's tenderness; and, next to her own children, they felt most keenly her removal as the withdrawment of their best earthly friend and counsellor.

Although Mrs Johnstone had scarcely ever been separated from her sister's companionship, because of their lot having been cast in the same neighbourhood, she was upheld under this trial as she had been under the distress and death of her husband; and, feeling that another pleasant tie to earth was loosed, and that her own departure was hastening on, her concern was to "keep herself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

In speaking of her sister's death, she said, that at evening time it was light with her: she knew in whom she had believed, and gently breathed her spirit into the hands of her reconciled God and Father, falling asleep in Jesus. And, O! how does

this blessed Jesus fill every blank! the relation in which he stands to his believing people comprises in it every tie and every affection. He calls them "my sister," as well as my "spouse," and this union is indissoluble; it never can be broken—nothing can separate from Christ's love, which is everlasting, as well as unchangeable.

Another dearly loved friend and brother in Jesus, with whom Mrs Johnstone had enjoyed many seasons of spiritual refreshment, was called to his heavenly home in the November of 1841. Meeting her the following February, the writer found her in a remarkably elevated frame, which she acknowledged she had experienced from the time of her having been favoured with a few short interviews with this eminent man of God, as he lay with the shadows of the evening stretching over him, and waiting for the dawning of the cloudless morning. The south wind of the Spirit gently blowing, caused the fragrance of his heavenly graces to flow out, and made the spiritually enlightened visitor feel, while standing at his bedside, how delicious must be the odours which are breathed from those trees of righteousness, when transplanted from the cold and ungenial soil of this world to the paradise of God!

Mrs Johnstone seemed to enjoy much comfort in reflecting upon the peaceful end of this pious man, so eminently taught of God, as well as upon the state of mind displayed by his excellent wife, on her death-bed, when called to leave a large young

family; and to feel that there was much, both in their life and in their death, to encourage, strengthen, and confirm faith. While they lived, the writer used to imagine that she saw in Mr and Mrs S——, of Port-Glasgow, a living realisation of the portraiture of Zacharias and Elizabeth. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless;" they delighted in the law of the Lord, and in his law did they meditate day and night; and so, the eye was refreshed by beholding, in their case, "the tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; whose leaf also shall not wither, so that whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." God's law, as it was the rule of their life, was also the spring of their comforts. Thoughts of God, and of his blessed word, were interwoven with the business and converse of every day, as well as mingled in the repose and slumbers of the night. They opened their mouths wide, and received abundantly the living streams that flow from the word of God, springing up in the first promise, and running on through the whole scriptures to the last invitation. Theirs was holy love thirsting, soaring upwards in fervent desires "towards the Lord God, and towards the remembrance of his name;" and, as both of them walked with God here, so both of them experienced that he was their guide even unto death, enabling them to meet the messenger, and obey his summons, with unshaken confidence, and

undisturbed serenity of soul. What a legacy have this worthy couple left to their beloved family, and to the church of the living God, in their believing prayers and pious example!

There was one scene connected with her last interview with Mr S., which Mrs Johnstone dwelt upon with peculiar satisfaction. When he was at the side of Jordan, with the promised heavenly Canaan full in view, he said to her with a countenance beaming with benignity and childlike humility, —"The Lord my God *has commanded for me an exceeding great calm*." What a large measure of the Saviour's peace, promised to all his followers, was expressed in these words! "Oh that we may also experience," she would say, "when we come to the river that must be crossed, ere we reach Emanuel's happy land, 'the Lord our God commanding for us an exceeding great calm!'" How soon, in its fullest extent, was this wish realised in blissful experience in her own last hours!

The writer had the happiness of again meeting Mrs Johnstone at the April communion in Glasgow, 1842. She embraced with evident relish the various opportunities of waiting upon the Lord in his ordinances, which such an occasion afforded. Her happy frame of mind and spiritual profiting were apparent to all. On the forenoon of the Friday, she was present at one of those little meetings for social prayer, in which she had long found a well-spring of spiritual refreshment. The christian friends

assembled were, with the exception of the friend in whose house the little company met, comparatively strangers to her; but they were much arrested by the part which she took in conducting the service, and with her remarks on the word preached on the previous fast-day, together with her pleadings for the preparation of heart that comes from the Lord, both for ministers and people, in connexion with the approaching solemnity. They have often since referred to the humility, poverty of spirit, and experimental acquaintance with the working of sin within, and with the antidote for this inward malady, found in His cross "who came to seek and save the lost," exhibited by her on this occasion as illustrating the words of the psalmist: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul!"

The passage of scripture she gave to the meeting for prayerful consideration, was a petition she often presented for herself, and those uniting in social devotion with her, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" pleading that, as it is only through Christ we have the knowledge of the glory of God, we might be put in the cleft of the smitten rock while he passed by, revealing, by his Spirit, his glory, as seen in his face "who is the brightness of the Father's glory." This prayer of Moses, so frequently breathed by her, has been realised in the bright and glorious scene which opened upon her emancipated spirit—even the unclouded vision of God and the Lamb.

At the house of Mrs Johnstone's relative, with whom she always resided when attending the communion in Glasgow, the Monday evening was spent in sweet fellowship with her cousins, who being kindred spirits, had, from childhood, been knit to her by the ties of sisterly affection. It was the custom, on such occasions, to endeavour to recall what could be remembered of the provision of Zion, with which we had been supplied throughout the season of gospel ordinances we had severally enjoyed, and as it was being divided, Mrs Johnstone did seem "to rejoice more than they that find great spoil." The Song of Solomon had long been with her a favourite portion of scripture, and she used to express surprise that ministers do not more frequently select texts from it. She had greatly enjoyed a sermon on the evening of the Sabbath, from the words, "And his banner over me was love," and spoke with great animation as to the use of banners, standards, or ensigns, to gather and keep persons together. Thus Christ himself was lifted up on the cross, and now in the gospel, that he may gather souls unto him; and she expatiated with evident delight upon the idea of the banner waving over the believer, with its mottos and inscriptions; the eye of faith obtaining such a glimpse of the cross, and of him who hung upon it, as to fill the soul with keenest sorrow for those sins that brought the Lord of glory to the dust of death. Then again, as the banner continued to wave, faith beholds the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sin of the world, and perceives written the words that bring peace, and reveal cure to the sin-sick soul: "and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Then appears the soul-melting and comforting truth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life: and herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Many such precious evenings had been spent in christian fellowship, but as this was the last enjoyed under that kind roof, by the circle of friends to which Mrs Johnstone belonged, there is a touching tenderness of spirit awakened on every remembrance of it. Mrs Johnstone, as has already been stated, was from her youth up, distinguished by her love for ordinances, and when recalling the last opportunity she was favoured to enjoy in Glasgow, we are inclined to go back a few years, and to review her exercises during that communion season when cholera was in this country. It had reached Glasgow, but there had been as yet no cases in Greenock, and when the usual time for the April communion in Glasgow arrived, some of those who were in the habit of attending, hesitated as to the duty of going, under a fear of coming into a situation by which they might either endanger themselves, or, as was apprehended, be the means of carrying the infection to others.

Mrs Johnstone had heard this, and had even been urged not to go; and though her mind was deeply solemnised as to the affecting visitation, and much concerned that the voice of this loud-speaking providence might be heard and sanctified to all, yet she could not see that keeping back from ordinances was the way to expect that this end would be gained. At the Friday meeting, united supplication was made for guidance as to this matter, for Mrs Johnstone was one who did not approve of exposing either herself or her family to infectious disease, unless there was a special call to it. She said, "Let us also pray over it with our husbands, and if they approve, we shall meet each other at the steamer in the morning, and you will go with me and stay at my cousin's till Monday, when, immediately after public worship is over, we shall return." When the Saturday morning came, the writer, accompanied by her husband, went to the steam-boat, where we found Mr and Mrs Johnstone to our great joy. On taking leave, after handing us into the boat, Mr Johnstone said, "The Lord you seek to serve be with you; he will take care of you; do not fatigue yourselves by long walks in Glasgow; be sure always to secure a conveyance." The afternoon of that day becoming very wet, as we attended separate places of worship, at a considerable distance from each other, Mrs Johnstone subjected herself to much inconvenience in driving after her friend. As we occupied the same sleeping-room, I found that her

eyes never closed throughout the whole night, but that she continued in a Jacob-like spirit, wrestling for the conversion of sinners, the reclaiming of backsliders, and the awakening of careless professors; pleading that the signal dealing in providence that was passing over our land, as well as the dispensation of appointed ordinances, might be blessed for this end; and then seeking that the Lord would "arise and come into his rest, that his priests might be clothed with righteousness, that his saints might shout for joy," fulfilling his promise "by abundantly blessing the provision of Zion, and satisfying her poor with bread." It was a short night, and Mrs Johnstone arose refreshed in body and spirit for the spiritual exercises of the day. She had been in close communion with the Lord of the Sabbath, and she panted after nearer discoveries of his superabounding love in his house of prayer, and at his holy table. It was not enough for her that her feet were about to stand within the New Testament Jerusalem, unless faith's eye beheld the King in his beauty, the glory of all Divine and human perfections resplendent in him. In being allowed to go to the altar of God, it was her desire to draw near with a true heart; she felt that it was vain to come to holy ordinances, if she did not in them come to a holy God; she was concerned that no sin might be unrepented of, unpardoned, unsubdued; that there might be no part which was not beautified with Christ's finished salvation, as it was in this way only she could have

a right to fellowship with the Lord of the feast, and with his assembled guests.

Her desires and believing expectation were more than realised that day, as she listened to the things touching the King; the action sermon being preached from the first part of the 45th Psalm, and the Lord's servant being greatly strengthened as he spoke concerning King Jesus, his kingdom, and government.

When we met in the evening she was full of the subject. We had indeed been taken into the banqueting house, and made to see that our Beloved is more than another's beloved, and that as he excelleth all others, so much he is worthy of our love. "It was a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, well refined;" Christ, the Master and Provider of the feast, himself the chief entertainment—"his flesh was meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed."

On the Monday, she proposed we should worship at the same place, that we might not delay a moment in returning to our homes, after our object in leaving them had been accomplished, and asked whether I would go with her, or she would come with me. Upon saying I would greatly wish to hear the conclusion of the subject the excellent minister had been discoursing from, both on Saturday and Sabbath evening (the text, the gospel of John, 3d chapter, from the 14th to the 18th verse inclusive), she instantly said, "Then will I go with you;" and she found her soul richly fed, often saying, "Truly the last may be said to be the best day of the feast."

One thing that tended to Mrs Johnstone's hearing with comfort and satisfaction, was her entire freedom from anything like prejudice. It was the Chief Shepherd's voice she always sought to hear; and every gospel sermon, by whatever messenger it came, brought with it her Master's message to her; nor was there anything that pained her more than to hear individuals attempting to criticise ministers or their discourses. It is the Divine truth which they have declared, that we have to do with, she would say, and the grand question which concerns us is, whether we have received it mixed with faith, that it may prove to us, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, "the savour of life unto life."

On the Thursday after Mrs Johnstone's last communion season in Glasgow, in fulfilment of a promise given after an affectionate invitation, which would admit of no refusal, the writer accompanied her to Willow Park. Ever alive to the best interests of all with whom she might meet, she never travelled without taking with her a parcel of little books and tracts, that, should no other opportunity of doing good offer, she might at least endeavour to circulate a few of those silent preachers among her fellow-travellers.

In the train as we went to Greenock the carriage was filled with passengers. Soon after starting, Mrs Johnstone took out a few of her little books, handed one to me, then began reading herself, and looking

to an interesting and apparently thoughtful young gentleman sitting opposite, she asked, with a pleasing smile, if he would accept one of the small books. Thanking her politely, he received it. His father, as we afterwards found, who occupied the next seat, seemed so pleased with the attention shown to his son, that she felt encouraged to present him with one also. The other two gentlemen in the carriage observing this, turned their heads towards Mrs Johnstone, appearing to look as if they would have no objections to take one too. This was the very thing she watched for, and in a modest way she held out one to each of the gentlemen. There was a tact and a delicacy of deportment in the manner in which this was managed, that could only be accounted for from her constant habit of lifting up the soul in desire for Divine guidance, and then acting in humble dependance on promised grace. When the young gentleman had finished reading, he appeared deeply affected, and without being able to speak, offered to give back the tract. His father, thanking Mrs Johnstone, said: "My son is just on his way to London, to sail for India." Conversation upon his present circumstances and future prospects was immediately entered upon; Mrs Johnstone making many suitable and impressive remarks, to which both father and son seemed to listen with deep attention. As we drew near the landing-place, Mrs Johnstone took her whole store of small books and tracts, and presenting them to the young man, asked

his father if he would allow his son to accept of them, and take them with him to India. He replied, "Surely the kindness is too great to receive from a stranger;" but, on her assuring him that she would esteem the kindness as done to herself, if the young gentleman would take them and carefully peruse them, they both warmly expressed their thanks, and the young man, taking the parcel, promised to peruse its contents on his voyage; and as he took leave, he said, with tears rolling over his manly countenance, "I shall never forget this interview!" Nor did she forget to remember him, in praying that better blessings than any thing this poor world could give, might be bestowed.

This is a mere specimen of the manner in which she allowed no opportunity to pass, without at least attempting to do something for Christ. Many excellent books she distributed to the young and to the afflicted; never, however, without first asking that the Holy Spirit would direct as to what was most suited to their particular state of mind and circumstances: and then she accompanied her gift with earnest supplication, pleading that, in as far as the truths it contained were agreeable to the mind of the Spirit, they might, by the Divine blessing, prove of saving benefit to the individual. Indeed, it was her practice to carry the case of every one with whom she had intercourse from day to day, to the throne of grace. Delighting in errands to this throne, she was often engaging christian friends to join with

her, in making specific requests for particular cases. The church of Christ and the household of faith were daily on her spirit, nor did she forget the world lying in the wicked one.

Although she was conscientiously attached to the Church of Scotland, her christian love embraced all the true members of Christ's body, to whatever portion of the visible church they belonged, who were building upon the true foundation which God has laid in Zion. "Surely," she would say, "where Christ dwells, we may dwell; his spiritual body is made up of members from all evangelical denominations that hold the living Head."

None mourned more deeply than she, or was led to greater searchings of heart, "for the divisions of Reuben." She suffered keenly on account of the contendings of the brethren, frequently saying, respecting the present aspect of the church, and the conflicting opinions of its office-bearers and members, "Satan seems very fierce, because he knows that his time is short, his aim being to throw his firebrands among the professing people of God, and set them to disputing and fighting with one another, rather than uniting to invade his kingdom; but this is our comfort," she would say, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah holds his chain, and all his efforts to destroy the work of God, and retard the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, will assuredly turn out to his utter confusion, and the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness throughout the world." She illustrated

the militant state of the church, by comparing it to an army, as seen from a distance, engaged in battle, and appearing a confused mass, fighting against each other. Come nearer the army, and you find they are acting in concert, obeying the commands of the same general. So faith, as it takes a closer inspection of the soldiers enlisted under the banner of the Captain of Salvation, notwithstanding all that sense, Satan, and the world say to the contrary, sees them consisting of well-appointed and well-regulated detachments of the same grand army, all clad with the complete armour provided by their Sovereign, and all aiming at one end, the subjection of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The position of the Established Church of Scotland engaged her deep and prayerful solicitude. Many restless nights, as well as anxious days, she suffered, because of the painful aspect of its affairs, ardently desiring increased purity of doctrine and discipline, and that the standard of christian character might be raised among both ministers and people throughout the church universal. Intensely did she wish that that portion of Christ's church, which was endeared to her by so many hallowed associations, might be delivered from all that was secular and impure in its alliance; and that the "King who sits upon his holy hill in Zion," whose laws are all holy, and who requires that his subjects "be holy as he is holy," should be clearly seen and acknowleged as the Head over all things to the church, "which is his body,

the fulness of him that filleth all in all." This being a subject of vital importance, as regarded the interests of true godliness throughout the land, it occupied much of our prayerful fellowship during this season of precious intercourse, leaving the impression confirmed and deepened that had often been felt respecting Mrs Johnstone, that she possessed the spirit of the martyr; and that had she lived in days of persecution, rather than have dishonoured or denied "the Lord that bought her," she would, through grace, have cheerfully sealed her testimony with her blood. All who knew how ready she was to deny herself, will attest her willingness to make any personal sacrifice, rather than make shipwreck of a good conscience. In seeking the good of others, she would say, when fears were expressed that she would injure her health, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. How far short do all my poor labours come of this test!"

An association having, a few years before this, been formed for visiting and endeavouring to instruct the females in Bridewell, Mrs Johnstone became one of the weekly visitors. She felt a lively concern for the success of every benevolent effort, which was made for the restoration to the paths of virtue of those degraded outcasts of society, and experienced much pleasure and profit in commending to them that blessed Saviour, who, in the days of his flesh,

was in derision styled, what was indeed the description of his character, "a friend of publicans and sinners." Through her untiring efforts for their instruction in "the paths of righteousness," it is to be hoped that many of those who, from time to time, listened to the scriptures either read by them to her, or by her to them, and explained in her peculiarly clear and simple manner, will, by their after life, evidence that her labours among them have been accompanied with saving power, and that they know experimentally the meaning of the Saviour's words: "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much."

Another department of labour at this time demanding much unwearied attention, as well as the exercise of enlarged christian sympathy, was the extensive destitution arising from the depression of trade in Greenock, by which many families were suffering even the want of the necessaries of life, and were laid under the necessity of making application to such as were likely to compassionate their case, and relieve their urgent wants. Her friends wondering, sometimes, at the patience with which she allowed her time to be broken in upon, and the pains she took to find out the real circumstances of their varied cases, found it difficult to suppress some expression of approbation, which she uniformly checked by saying, "Oh think how God bears with us, and so richly supplies our every want! we are only stewards of whatever he bestows upon us, and

must soon render at his judgment-seat an account of our stewardship."

In order that her children might not only have sympathy with the needy and the afflicted, but learn contentment and feel gratitude for their comfortable lot, she took them to see the poor and distressed, embracing every opportunity of pointing out the contrast, and telling them of Him to whom they were indebted for all they enjoyed.

Many striking instances, during this period of unwonted distress, of the exercise of her benevolent kindness, have been mentioned since her departure, by several of those gentlemen who were active agents, in lending both their money and exertions to support the unemployed. Some of them have spoken with surprise of the christian wisdom and discretion by which her long experience enabled her to bestow charity in such a way as was best fitted to promote the good of those who received it.

CHAPTER VI.

Domestic happiness at Willow Park—Alison Johnstone—Early indications of her piety—Her remarkable spiritual-mindedness—Personal attractions—Topics of conversation—Saturday evenings at Willow Park—Exercises with the young—Mrs Johnstone's love for the Sabbath—Mode of spending the Lord's day at Willow Park—Subjects of Sabbath converse—Christian intercourse reviewed—Parting request.

WORDS cannot express the rich enjoyment that, during the whole of the visit, which the writer paid to Willow Park, on the occasion already referred to, was poured into our cup of christian friendship. It was one of the finest springs ever known in that part of the country—all nature seemed to smile with unusual loveliness—the winter, with its storms, had passed—the flowers appeared—the singing of the birds charmed the ear—the freshness of the trees, and the profuse blossoms by which they were covered, gratified and refreshed the eye, while the fragrant odours that came from the plants and flowers, together with the beautiful landscape by which we were surrounded, regaled all the senses, producing a buoyancy of spirit which tended to give increased relish to every pleasure. One could not

mingle with a family where the law of mutual love and of love to mankind, was in such powerful and active operation, without offering the prayer, that they might long continue to live together in unbroken unity, blessed of the Lord, blessings to one another, and to all around. Alison, the second daughter of Mrs Johnstone, was fond of taking exercise on horseback, her brother generally riding out with her. When they were setting out, they sometimes brought their horses round, that they might give us the pleasure of seeing them mounted. It was felt to be a sight of touching interest to look upon the affectionate sister and brother, as they galloped away with youthful glee, to enjoy, in gratifying companionship, their afternoon ride. On one of these occasions, their mother, looking after them with fondest smiles, said, "this is like Job when his children were about him, 'and when he washed his steps with butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil;' but we must be careful not to expect a continuance of anything that is earthly, taking as a special part of the privilege connected with the well-ordered covenant, every kind of discipline promised according to our need, seeing 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'" The words seem even now to fall upon the ear, so powerful was the impression they made, as she went on to say, turning to her friend, "We are bound to accept his chastening as the highest expression of his fatherly love; Oh, yes, he loves

his people too well to suffer them to take up with anything short of himself as their portion!"

Alison was certainly all that a mother's fondest love could desire. Under the guidance and tuition first of her mother and then of her teachers, especially the excellent lady, at whose admirably conducted boarding-school she resided for two years, she grew up no less distinguished by all the minor attractions which shed lustre on the female character—the graceful ease and elegant proportions of her form, the sweet expression of her countenance, and the feminine gentleness of her manners,—than by the higher characteristics of a good understanding, quickness of penetration, solidity of judgment, a lively imagination, and a disposition ever ready to throw a veil over the weaknesses of others. But that which lent the charm of true beauty to all her gifts and acquirements, was her genuine piety, her meek and quiet spirit, her humbleness of mind, her fear of offending, by indulging in anything that would look like sin, or would lead to it, her desire ever to sit in the teachable temper of a little child at the feet of Jesus, "learning of him who is meek and lowly in heart, that she might find rest to her soul;" his law the rule of her life, his word the touchstone by which she desired to try every motive and action, and his glory the chief aim and end of life.

By her pious mother, she had been early taught, that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and

all her paths peace;" and her earliest imaginings had been of the good Shepherd "gathering the lambs with his arms, and carrying them in his bosom." In the morning of life she had been conducted to his altar, and taught in her first lispings to speak the praise of the babe who was born in Bethlehem, "the Saviour Christ the Lord," who, when on earth, took the little children into his arms, and blessed them. The incorruptible seed thus sown in the infant mind, carefully watched by the believing mother, and constantly watered by her prayers and tears, appeared early to become, through the renewing of the Holy Spirit, the means of spiritual life; for, even during her childhood, she exhibited hopeful tokens of the operation of the Spirit of adoption—such as sorrow for, and hatred of sin, and love to God as a Father, and to Jesus Christ as her Saviour.

An opportunity was afforded to the writer of these pages, of witnessing the opening beauties of the character of this young disciple in close and frequent conversations which were held with her, when she was looking forward, for the first time, to a public profession of faith in Christ, by taking her seat at his holy table.

While she was under the care of Mrs K——, to whom reference has already been made, she rapidly advanced in spiritual mindedness, and she always looked back with affectionate gratitude to that period, delighting to speak of the benefit received, both from the example and instructions of that worthy lady, for

whom she retained a warm affection. In the few years that elapsed after leaving school, while her spiritual progress was manifest, her state of mind was often painful and depressing, arising from a fear of self-deception, and of trusting to any refuge of lies, in a matter of such transcendent importance as the eternal safety of the undying spirit. Her mother spoke of this as salutary discipline, by which the soul was detached from creature confidences and self-righteousness, kept humble and dependent, and made willing to fall in with the divinely-appointed method of salvation through faith in Christ.

It was truly animating to witness her whole deportment during the spring of 1842. The living principle of grace was exhibited in a delicate attention to all relative duties, and a minute consideration of her beloved sister's feelings, whose health was at that time enfeebled, by a recent attack of influenza. While she anticipated, if possible, her sister's every wish, she studied to render home cheerful and attractive to her younger brother, and paid the strictest regard to the executing of the little commissions which were left in her charge by her much-loved elder brother, then in Newfoundland. Frequently she took me into the hot-house to see the vines, and she would say, "I like to look at them, for dear James's sake; he wished no fruit to grow on them for three years, to allow the vines to strengthen." This not unfrequently gave rise to conversation, first about her brother, for whom she felt a peculiarly affectionate

interest; then about the nature of the vines, their varieties, as far as she knew them, and the histories of the plants and flowers. The conversation would then be directed to Jesus Christ the true and living vine, of which the Father is the husbandman; to the necessity of being ingrafted into him; to the great privilege of being fruit-bearing branches; to the various means which the vine-dresser adopts to secure this end, and our need of drawing nourishment daily from Christ, the source of spiritual life and growth, in order to our bringing forth those fruits by which God is pleased and glorified.

Many such refreshing opportunities were given of observing the spiritual growth of this dear young follower of the blessed Jesus. Not unfrequently in the morning before breakfast, a little quiet conversation was enjoyed with her in the dining-room, where she was found generally alone, either reading the scriptures, or some book illustrative of the truths contained in the sacred volume. Springing up to give the affectionate embrace, and to inquire how the night had been passed, she would readily enter into conversation on the subject about which she had been reading, and turn from that to the instructive nature of the season,—the rapidity with which vegetation was advancing,—the reproof which the early song of the little birds, as they warbled out their sweet notes of praise at the dawn of the morning, gave to us,—and the lessons taught, by the husbandman's carefully preparing the soil, casting in the

seed, covering it up, and taking out the weeds, as diligently as if the result depended upon himself, while he knows that without the influences of the heavens, all his efforts will be but labour in vain; "waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, and having long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

She gave a warm response when the duty was adverted to of carefully and diligently improving the seed-time of childhood and early youth, for treasuring up the good seed of the word, and of attending to all appointed means of grace, with as much assiduity, as if all depended upon ourselves, while we know "that it is God alone that gives the increase;" waiting, not like the husbandman for crops of corn, but for "a kingdom," a "crown of life;" everlasting felicity, glory "that fadeth not away."

Many such conversations memory dwells upon with solemn interest; but while the writer was observing with mingled astonishment and delight, the advancement in grace of this lovely young friend, the thought did not occur, that long before the return of the next spring, she would be sleeping in the dust. Often the eye followed her, as she walked across the room, or entered with the flush of health covering her sweet countenance, every feature animated with the buoyancy of youth; and one could not help admiring the exquisite elegance and beauty of her form. There was a grace about her every movement, of which she appeared utterly unconscious,

and that threw around her an interest which was felt by all who saw her.

But it was the comeliness of Christ and his meek and lowly spirit that communicated even to the external aspect its real charm, and called forth the fond hope that from her station in life, and other manifold advantages, a long life of usefulness was opening before her. He, whose ways are not as ours, "for as the heavens are higher than the earth, saith the Lord, so are my ways higher than your ways," had higher designs in maturing this plant of the Father's right hand planting so rapidly; his purpose being that while its branches were spreading, and its moral beauty and fragrance becoming as the olive-tree, and the scent thereof as the wine of Lebanon, it might be transplanted to the paradise above, in order to yield its richest fruits, and shed its sweetest perfumes.

A moonlight walk with Alison is recalled with grateful emotion, because of the full and unreserved manner, in which she opened and detailed the workings of her mind regarding Divine things, for many years back, going over her varied difficulties and conflicts, and the different aspects in which truth presented itself to her mind at different times; saying, you see what painful struggles I have had with unbelieving doubts and fears, and how graciously the Lord has continued to bear with me, revealing by his Spirit more and more clearly himself, "as the way, the truth, and the life."

She spoke with much feeling of the temptations that beset the Zion-bound traveller at every step, the deadening influence of mingling, in almost any degree, with the company of worldly professors, much more so with fashionable society, and expressed strongly the duty of being careful, in forming connexions in life, to keep from being unequally yoked in those relations that are our choice, seeing that if a positive Divine command be violated, no blessing can be expected. Conversation had been turned to this subject, by our speaking of a dear young friend, who, from her personal attractions and prospects of affluence, was likely to receive proposals of marriage from individuals, who, however estimable in some respects, might be unable to appreciate the depth of her religious sentiments. While she had all that could be wished for at her command, and seemed for the time to be raised above trial, she was at that very period, feeling this circumstance to be a cause of much distress, as the amiableness of her spirit rendered it painful to her, to be the occasion of uneasiness or disappointment to any one.

"My thoughts," said Alison, "have been dwelling on that interesting case since we talked it over. Although so much her inferior, I have experienced not a little that is kindred to what was her affliction; and would, like her, seek to engage the people of God to help me with their prayers, that I may be enabled with stedfastness to resist all temptations to enter into alliance with those, however great may be

the outward fascination, who might prove a hindrance to my growth in grace, and draw my soul away from Christ. I feel so much within me, which makes my soul cleave to the dust, that my intercourse would require to be with those who, by their decision and spiritual attainments, would aid in promoting my heaven-ward progress, and not with those who would tend to retard it."

The Saturday evenings at Willow Pårk were seasons of hallowed privilege. From the period at which the Maternal Association was formed, a concert of prayer had been held on the Saturdays, one or two mothers meeting at an hour the most convenient, with their children, for the purpose of instructing them in the word of God, and of praying with them. Acting upon this, Mrs Johnstone, while her family was young, spent some time with them in this exercise in the forenoon of the Saturday; but as they advanced, she found the evening the most suitable time. Faithfully observing that rule of the Association, "When any of the mothers are removed by death, it is the duty of the Association to regard with peculiar concern the spiritual welfare of her children, to evince this by a continual remembrance of them in their prayers, and by such tokens of sympathy and kindness, as their circumstances might require," she requested the children of an excellent and affectionate mother, who had resided in her neighbourhood, to assemble with her own, until their elder sister grew up, who was ably qualified to take the mother's place: and the

family of her departed sister, also took part in those precious Saturday evening exercises.

These were blissful seasons of withdrawment from the lawful occupations of the week, affording suitable preparation at an early hour for the spiritual exercises of the holy day. From childhood the Sabbath had been to Mrs Johnstone "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable," in which she complied with the Divine injunction, "Not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words." Her husband cordially united in every arrangement likely to conduce to its being hallowed throughout their household; and, for years before his death, never forgot to put in a conspicuous place in the dining-room, where all could not fail to have attention called to it, a paper, on which were printed in large letters, the two passages (Exodus xx. 8): "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" (Rev. i. 10): "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

Mrs Johnstone delighted to speak of Mary Magdalene's love to the crucified Saviour, her following him to the last in his humiliation, and her being the first to meet him in his exaltation. That disciple feared neither the darkness nor the loneliness of the sepulchre—her love was strong as death; like her, Mrs Johnstone would say, we should seek to have the soul's best affections going early after him every day as the chief good, and especially on the mornings of his own day, passing by all creatures, the most excellent, for even the angels would not *satisfy Mary*:

nothing but Christ himself satisfied her; and when, like her, after all her weeping, we can say, as he speaks in his word, or by his servants, "It is the voice of my beloved," with what holy joy and triumph will faith run forward to embrace a risen Lord!

It was a privilege of a high order to spend a few Sabbaths under her roof. She rejoiced in the return of the christian Sabbath, with its hallowed associations; improving and enjoying it, as introductory to that rest from sin, and that holy tranquillity of soul in God, which will be realised upon the dawning of the eternal Sabbath, which her spirit now celebrates amid the dazzling brightness of that celestial city, where there is no "need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Mrs Johnstone exemplified, in a high degree, the important truth she ever sought to inculcate upon others, that the blessed Sabbath was the day to gather for all the other days of the week; that the spiritual pulse was indicated by the manner in which it was improved, and that, in all the religious duties of hearing, reading, praying, meditating, and conversing, what should be uppermost in our hearts and desires, was to seek and see Jesus, who is the hidden manna—the food which faith lives upon while we are travelling through the wilderness.

In speaking of "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," she remarked—It will be there that true humility will reign, because we shall there

fully understand the fearful gulf, from which we have been rescued, and the costly ransom paid for our deliverance—"the blood of the Lamb." She took pleasure in observing the building of a house, and was wont to say that the smallest little rough stones were needed in rearing the structure, as well as those that were large and carefully polished. So it is in the building of mercy, "not the very least stone can be wanting as this spiritual temple is erected." She would add,—I like to think of the stones in Solomon's temple, having been all prepared beforehand, that there might be no noise in building; so here, in the militant state, all the noise and hammering is heard, that there may be perfect peace and perfect unity in "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

She pleaded that the latter-day glory might be hastened, that "the reign of righteousness and peace," might become universal; "that, as there is but one Shepherd, so there might be but one sheepfold;" that all obstructions might be taken out of the way of the spread of the gospel, till, from the uttermost parts of the earth, songs might be heard from souls called by Divine grace to celebrate the mercy of the Father, the redeeming love of the Son, and the spiritual blessings enjoyed in him; so "that Christ might see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" with converts out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And she would add, Oh pray that the Lord of the harvest may send forth labourers emi-

nently qualified, and richly endowed with all needful gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, who will be willing to take their lives in their hands, and go far hence, carrying the glad message of salvation to the perishing! and let the prayer many times, throughout the day and the night, rise from our inmost souls, "And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen," our prayers ending where David's the son of Jesse ended.

Oh, how mournful that we should be so little alive to the worth of souls, which have been ransomed by a price of infinite value—souls that must exist for ever, either in a state of unmitigated and never-ending misery, or of everlasting blessedness—a life, eternal as the God who gave it! When he who made the world put the soul in the balance with the world, he said, "What shall it profit a man though he should gain the world if the soul be lost?" and his estimate must be true,—he only knows the real value of the world, for he made it; and the infinite worth of the soul, for he redeemed it. Let us seek above all things to be faithful to our own souls, and the souls of all over whom we have any influence, and be concerned that Christ's kingdom may be advanced in them and us, and that his will be done in us and them, on earth as in heaven.

As the period of this happy visit to Willow Park drew to a close, Mrs Johnstone wished that a forenoon might be spent in visiting the hill, where she

had so often been strengthened in body and refreshed in spirit. The word of God dwelling in her richly, in all wisdom, she possessed the happy faculty of calling it up, in admirable adaptation to the circumstances in which she was placed. The circumstance of our being alone upon the hill suggested profitable conversation respecting "Abraham as he went to mount Moriah with his beloved Isaac;" Moses, when he came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb, where "the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush;" the giving of the law at Sinai; "Moses being called to Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, where the Lord showed him the promised land ere he died;" "Mount Zion, beautiful for situation—the joy of the whole earth;" the blessed Saviour's "sermon on the mount,"—"his taking his three chosen disciples to an exceeding high mountain where his transfiguration took place,"—his often retiring with them to the Mount of Olives, and his spending whole nights alone on the mount in prayer. Mrs Johnstone talked over these subjects, and the spiritual truths connected with them, with a clearness of illustration truly edifying.

While walking slowly down the hill on our return, she said, pointing to the sea that lay before us, in unruffled calm, "Does not that remind you of those 'that have gotten the victory over the beast and his image, and they stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God; and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, say-

ing, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints?' What a song that will be—the song of providence, as well as of redemption—as every link in the chain is unfolded in the light of eternity, with its bearing upon the sanctification of the soul, and preparation for the service of the 'minister of the upper sanctuary!' It will then be distinctly perceived, that our seasons of affliction, from whatever cause they arose, were among our most blessed privileges and spiritual mercies; the furnace being the divinely-appointed means of 'making known the riches of God's glory on the vessels of mercy,' and fitting them for his pure and holy service."

On the way back to Willow Park, she went over the principal events of her life, narrating the Lord's dealings with her soul under them. For even while journeying through life's pilgrimage we are carefully to "remember all the way which the Lord our God hath led us in the wilderness, to humble us, and prove us, to know what was in our heart, whether we would keep his commandments or no." She spoke particularly as to the necessity of being born again, of the Author of this new existence, of its tendencies, principles, dispositions, affections, and aims being all new; and reverted to that period of her youth, when the Lord wrought for her this signal deliverance. She recorded anew, to the praise of rich grace, the goodness of the Lord in his dealing with her beloved husband, gratefully enumerating

many minute and striking proofs of this, and adverting to a portion of scripture she had received much comfort from, being enabled to plead it in his behalf soon after their first acquaintance: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him, I will lead him also;" and the promise goes on to say, "and restore comforts to him and his mourners." Now, she said, though this refers to those who mourn for sin being comforted, still as it was my privilege to see the whole of the promise so signally fulfilled in the blessed experience of my dear husband, I have claimed and realised, since his removal, the last part of the promise, "and restore comforts to his mourners;" and in the absence of my husband, the Lord, from day to day has comforted, and given me "to sing as in the days of youth." How tenderly do I sympathise with all widows! Could my voice reach every one of them, I would wish to tell them that I have been brought into the wilderness, that the Lord might speak comfortably to my heart, proving that he is indeed "the stranger's shield, the widow's stay, and the orphan's help!"

The last day of this visit came: it was one of deep interest, and was partly spent in the garden, where at all seasons, but especially in spring, Mrs Johnstone found many sources of profitable relaxation. She had peculiar pleasure in watching the blossoms, and the formation of the fruit, carefully picking off any caterpillar she observed, remarking, that as many of the fairest blossoms never came to

perfection, so many who set out with fair promise "to the better country," are entangled with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, and stop short of "the inheritance of the saints in light." How softly should we go, lest we should even seem to come short of this rest, because of unbelief! She dwelt upon the delightful idea of Christ's church as a garden enclosed by Divine grace, stored with every valuable plant, well cultivated and flourishing, having within itself a spring and fountain, whence every part of it is abundantly watered by the fertilising influences of the Holy Spirit. How consoling the consideration that individual believers are his garden, which he hath separated from the wilderness state of fallen man; and that though so sinful, weak, and worthless in themselves, they shall continue for ever to bring forth fruit, more precious to him than the choicest productions of the whole earth!

As every thing in this lovely spot looked so inviting, the writer said, I am leaving you in something like an earthly paradise. She replied, certainly it appears full of beauty, and it calls for deep and humble gratitude, that an abode so comfortable is provided in the wilderness. But it would be a poor exchange for the paradise of God, and the honours and felicities of the heavenly inheritance.

Many of our fellow-pilgrims that had left us behind them in the journey of life, engaged the thoughts and conversation of that day, so that a peculiar nearness was realised to " the spirits of the

just made perfect;" our beloved kindred who had died in the Lord, our beloved pastors, who had guided us from early years to "the green pastures," and declared to us "the unsearchable riches of Christ," all came in review, as we talked of the Lord's dealings with them, while the good Shepherd was conducting them by the footsteps of the flock to the land of promised rest. Mrs Johnstone remarked, that either in one way or other they had entered the kingdom through much tribulation, this being the appointed lot: but that it was matter of true joy to think of them now, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, as before the throne of his glory serving him day and night, in the full enjoyment of God; all the tears shed, both on account of sin and affliction, for ever wiped away; their knowledge of God, and participation of his likeness perfected; and complete satisfaction realised from the holy exercise and gratification of all their faculties. They will see Jesus as he is; and that is heaven, to be for ever with the Lord, to behold the glory of God shining through the glorified humanity of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." How thankful we ought to be that we are so far advanced in the wilderness journey, and that our souls will soon be freed from the imprisonment of the flesh, and from the sin and corruption that cleave to us while we remain encompassed with bodies of sin and death! We know, she said, the young may die, but we are sure the old

must. I cannot help sympathising with the young, when thinking how many weary steps they may have to tread in this vale of tears, ere they reach the close of their journey. O how sad would be the thought of having the present life to live over again!

Her longings "to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," were soon to be fully satisfied.

In prospect of separating on the following morning, part of the evening was spent in social prayer, an exercise for which Mrs Johnstone was always ready, feeling as she did that it was our highest privilege to dwell before the throne of grace, preparatory to dwelling before the throne of glory.

As Mrs Johnstone took leave of the writer on the following day, she entreated, with all the earnestness of a believing mother, yearning with intense desire over the spiritual life of her beloved offspring, that her sons might continue to be carried, by the prayer of faith, to the mercy seat. The writer has no recollection of meeting her without this request being made. Often she said, "Oh, seek that they may be enabled to make Moses' choice, that they may count it their highest honour to sit at the feet of Jesus, learning of him, and comply with his gracious invitation, My son, give me thine heart!"

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs Johnstone esteemed by the relatives of her husband—Alison's early habits for devotion—Visit to Edinburgh—Illness and death—Her dying sayings—Reflections suggested by her decease.

SHORTLY before the return of Mrs Johnstone's eldest son from Newfoundland in June, 1842, she went, for the benefit of her eldest daughter's health, to reside in the midst of the beloved relatives of her departed husband. Ever tenderly attached to them, they had become doubly endeared since his removal, and her prayerful interest in them was akin to that felt for her own family and kindred. That this affectionate interest was warmly reciprocated was abundantly manifested by the tribute of sorrowful affection, which was paid by those attached relatives, when they came to perform the last offices of kindness in accompanying her remains to their quiet resting-place. They unfeignedly mourned the loss which was sustained by themselves and their families in the withdrawment of her example and prayers. On several occasions, when spending a few months among these connexions, the same desire for the glory of God, and the well-being of her fellow-men,

which characterised her daily walk at home, led her to devise plans of active usefulness, which endeared her to not a few beyond the immediate circle of her kindred; and during the three months she resided among them (the summer preceding her death), a sweet savour of the spirit of him whose " meat and drink was to do the will of his Father, and finish the work given him to do," was diffused around her, the odour of which was felt by all who, on that occasion, came into contact with her; and when tidings of the illness and death of her beloved daughter, and then of her own sudden sickness, reached that quarter, the whole neighbourhood testified their affectionate interest, by the anxious inquiries which were made respecting them. Another proof of the high estimation in which those relatives and friends held her amiable spirit and christian character, was gathered from another of the brothers of Mr Johnstone, when he came to visit and sympathise with the bereaved family. His language was, " She knew there was enough in Christ for all, and having tasted that he is gracious, she could not rest till those she loved had tasted it too. I shall never be able to express what I owe to her for that knowledge of the way of salvation she was the means of communicating to me. She was a great boon to my brother, her own husband, and to all of us. I suppose such an individual is rarely to be found, at least I can only say, I never met with such another." He then intimated his great anxiety that

what could be remembered of her manner of living, as well as of her death-bed exercises, might be recorded; and stated that he and his friends would esteem such a memorial a gift of no ordinary value, seeing that they wished, above all things, to treasure her memory, and cherish the recollection of her holy walk and conversation.

During the three months that Mrs Johnstone and her eldest daughter resided in the neighbourhood of Moffat, the attached domestics, who were so long identified with the family, observed with pleasure Miss Alison's habit of rising early, that she might secure undisturbed time for reading and closet duties; also her pious remarks when attending to ordinary household arrangements, especially when sometimes assorting little pieces of fancy-work, or putting in order flowers in the drawing-room. While speaking of the beauty of the flowers, and noticing how soon they withered and were gone, she would say, what a striking emblem of the evanescent life of man, which the scripture compares to the fading flower, the fleeting shadow, the vapour which appeareth for a little and then vanisheth! adverting with deep solemnity to the nearness of eternity, as if anticipating the shortness of her own life upon earth. Many times have these domestics spoken with tender feeling of the happy summer they had with 'dear Miss Alison.'"

When the Queen visited Scotland in the autumn, of 1842, Alison left Willow Park for Edinburgh, in

excellent health and spirits, with her brothers, intending to remain there during her Majesty's residence in that neighbourhood. She then went to Peeblesshire, and continued there a few weeks in happy companionship, in the midst of a numerous circle of much-esteemed relatives and friends. She returned to Edinburgh towards the end of October. her dear and only sister meeting her there, for the purpose of visiting some friends before returning home. Mrs Johnstone had intended, as usual, to be in Glasgow at the communion, but hearing that Alison had been taken ill of what was thought a bilious attack, she did not go to Glasgow on the Wednesday; still, however, hoping that Alison might be so far recovered as to admit of both her daughters returning, so that she might leave for Glasgow, and be in time for public worship on Saturday.

On the intermediate Thursday, she called for a christian friend, with whom, from childhood, she had enjoyed the closest and sweetest intercourse; knowing that this beloved sister in Jesus, "a widow indeed," who had also been written childless, could enter into all her agitating feelings regarding her family. This precious friend, who had long suffered in the furnace of personal affliction, felt at that time so unwell as to have given orders, that whoever came should be told that she was unable that day to receive them. But Mrs Johnstone, having expressed a strong desire to see her, was admitted; her

reason for this urgency being, that she might engage the prayerful interest of her friend, who, she knew, lived near to the throne of mercy, and to Him who is our blessed Advocate with the Father. They took counsel together, as to some anxieties which Mrs Johnstone felt pressing upon her, regarding circumstances in which she anticipated she might be placed during the approaching winter, and also with respect to her daughter's affliction. They united in spreading the whole case before the Hearer of prayer; and, in committing their way to him, they found light, direction, and joy. Leaving their burden upon the Lord, they separated, "strengthened with strength inwardly," to bear the burdens, resist the temptations, and perform the duties to which they might be called, in either actively doing, or patiently suffering, the will of their heavenly Master.

The following evening brought tidings that Alison's disease was of such a nature as to render Mrs Johnstone's personal presence indispensable. She therefore set off instantly for Edinburgh, and found her fears realised; her daughter's sufferings being greater than she had any idea of, till she stood by the side of her sick-bed. The following extracts from the letters of a mutual friend, contain the first accounts which the writer received of the illness of this interesting young lady, and of the progress of the disease :—

EDINBURGH, 31st October 1842.

"I write at the request of our valued friend, Mrs Johnstone, who was called hither on Friday se'en-night, in consequence of Alison having been seized with typhus fever. No one can tell how a fever may terminate; but in this case, though the pulse has been high, and severe suffering has attended it, the medical gentlemen have never said there was any positively bad symptom. This is the nineteenth day, and the doctors think her a shade better.

"I dined in company with her and Ann, and came home in the same carriage, the day before she was taken ill, and was much struck with Alison's beauty, but still more pleased with the tone of good sense and christian feeling that marked her conversation; and you will be delighted to hear that, throughout her illness, the power of faith has been displayed in no ordinary degree, producing a peace of mind particularly favourable to bodily recovery. Mrs Johnstone is experiencing renewed proofs of Divine faithfulness, in having her own strength made equal to her day; and poor Ann is quite borne up by the same never-failing covenant God."

EDINBURGH, 3d November 1842.

"I had the pleasure of receiving your letter yesterday, and lost no time in communicating its contents to our friend, Mrs Johnstone, who feels deeply indebted to you and your husband for your

kind offer to join her in Edinburgh; but she could not think of allowing you to expose yourself to infection, as she never leaves Alison by night or by day, and has been very fortunate in a sick-nurse. The assistance of a friend is really unnecessary; but her feeling of obligation is the same as if she accepted your kindly-offered services. She desired me to say how much she values the sympathy of your prayers. It seems Dr Abercrombie only deems this the eighteenth day of the fever, and does not expect a change before Monday. He says she is going on favourably; but on-lookers, who have no professional skill, would suppose her case a most dangerous one—constant pain and uneasiness, with a high pulse, together with such prostration of strength as makes it necessary to take twelve glasses of wine in the four-and-twenty hours; but, in the midst of all, the mind is mightily upheld by Divine grace. The discoveries made by the Spirit to that dear girl, since she has been laid on a bed of languishing and suffering, both of her own vileness, and of the infinite value and sufficiency of Christ, are most instructive and delightful. I do trust and pray that her sickness may not be unto death, but for the glory of God."

EDINBURGH, November 8, 1842.

"Since I wrote to you, our dear young friend has been much worse. On Saturday her breathing was so laboured that a blister was applied in the morning,

and another towards evening. On Sabbath morning I was quite prepared to hear she was gone; however she had a little sleep, and appeared somewhat lightened in the morning. The doctor said she continued the same on Sabbath and yesterday. To-day he thinks her a shade better. There is no disease so fitted to keep one in a constant posture of dependence as a fever. You cannot build with confidence upon a favourable symptom, nor can you yield to despair, when things appear to be worse. I write this hurried line, as I am sure you will be anxious to hear."

EDINBURGH, 10th November 1842.

"I was much gratified by the receipt of your kind letter this morning. From the state of our dear young friend yesterday at mid-day, I had fondly hoped that her disease had taken a favourable turn. But her heavenly Father had higher designs for her. Her happy spirit joined the innumerable company around the throne between eleven and twelve last night. On entering the dark valley, a cloud seemed to overshadow her path, but it was of transient duration, for these words, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,' upon which her soul had fed throughout her illness, were brought home with renewed power and sweetness, and the close was indeed 'an abundant entrance into glory!' Her dear mother and sister have been wonderfully supported both in body and mind, and Mrs Johnstone's

great desire now is, that this touching bereavement may be sanctified to the surviving members of her family. Mr ——— and James are expected this evening. Poor James was little prepared for what has happened; indeed the doctors appeared to take a more cheerful view of the case yesterday than they had done some days before. Mrs Johnstone and Ann beg, with christian affection, to be remembered to you and your husband; also, to Miss S ——, with grateful thanks for your sympathy and prayers. Dear Alison had said she felt quite borne up by the prayers of others. These would have been of little avail had she not had an interest in the great Intercessor within the veil, but still they were unspeakably precious, as the fruits of his Spirit. Mrs Johnstone was particularly struck by the manner in which Romans v. 3–5, were illustrated in Alison's experience; but she will tell you many interesting particulars when you meet."

A friend who visited Mrs Johnstone during her daughter's illness, gives the following particulars of their conversations, as illustrative of the different estimate which the Christian forms, from the worldling, of those things which doubtless rendered her daughter, an object of admiration and envy to others.

"In speaking of Alison's intense sufferings, desire to depart and be with Christ, and evident preparation for the change, she said, 'It would be selfish to wish her to remain here, and O Miss —— I have been

wonderfully tried. She might have been married a dozen times, and I have got such a view of the temptations to which she might be exposed, I dare not wish to keep her back from her safe and heavenly home.' If a worldly mother had had a daughter possessing Alison's attractions and liberal fortune, she would have expected her to aggrandise her whole family by some great connexion, whilst this humble Christian only saw in these, snares for her daughter's soul."

It is gratifying to be able to give a few of Alison's own sayings, while on her death-bed. The following paper was found in Mrs Johnstone's pocket after her own death.

"Upon my first going to Edinburgh, dear Alison said: 'O mother, *be faithful, be faithful, to my soul!* What am I? a worm of the dust; Where am I going?—to the dust; For what was I made?—to glorify God; What would I wish to do?—glorify God. O Holy Spirit convince me of sin, of pride, of self-righteousness! O Jesus, save me! The first promise I was enabled to trust in was, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."' She had at times many fears lest she should be deceiving herself; but then she would say, 'Though thou slay me, I will trust in thee.' O Jesus have mercy upon me, and reveal thyself to me in another way than thou dost unto the world! Make me what thou wouldst have me to be! We will just trust in him,'

she said, 'for Christ says he has paid the debt. Blessed Jesus! O that I could love him! What strange depraved hearts we have! Jesus save me from pride and unbelief! O I would require to have warm love to Jesus, to enable me to bear this trouble!' On being told that she had great patience, she replied, 'It is not my patience, it was God that gave it to me. I think I have often given myself to Christ, when I was in health: I long to know if I am Christ's or not; it is a very solemn and important question.'

"'It was at the fountain of holiness I began to live. O God, my sins, since I came into this world, are as the sand by the sea shore, innumerable, but thou knowest how to save me by the blood of Jesus! O Jesus, give me patience! I thank thee for what thou hast already given me. If it be thy will, I would rather die than live: dear Lord Jesus, come! O that to me to live may be Christ, or to die unspeakable gain! All such works as Paine's should be burned; tell James and John never to read any such books.'

"'I wish to be made ready for death, judgment, and eternity, but God only can prepare me, and I am continuing to pray to him for it.'

"'Oh, dear mother, help me to improve the time, that I may not sleep when I ought to be attending to what God is saying in his word, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come

buy wine and milk without money, and without price! Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.'"

"'I don't like company: I would be at that company above, where Christ sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father.'

"'Oh that thou, blessed Jesus, wouldst take me to thyself this night! I then would fly away and be at rest! Surely thou canst find some use for me in the temple above!'

"'Tell James and John to seek an interest in Christ, in the days of health and strength.'

"On the doctor's pronouncing her a little better, she felt greatly disappointed, and said, 'Oh mother, if I were ready to die, I would rather depart and be with Christ, which is far better than to return to this world of sin and temptation!' On my saying she ought to be willing to live if it was God's will, she said, 'Well, mother, we would require to pray for resignation for this: I fear I want it, for I would rather die.'

"'Oh God deliver my dear brothers, and sister, and mother, from the curse of the broken law! Christ has fulfilled it for us. I have often prayed for James and John. "Hold fast that which thou hast; that no man take thy crown." Hear what the word says: "What is thy crown?" I trust in the

promises! but, Lord, I am so weak, so guilty, and vile, none can save me but thee!'

"'Oh, blessed Jesus, thou hast said, 'Whosoever cometh unto thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out!" I take thee at thy own word. This is the first promise thou didst enable me to trust in, and thou gavest it to me in secret prayer,—in your room, mother, as I knelt at the foot of your bed."

"'Observing me writing, she said, 'Oh mother, write down the legacy: "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!" "To him every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."'

"Upon my expressing some anxiety about her brothers as to their spiritual welfare, and asking if she had any message to send them, she replied, 'Tell them to seek Christ early;' then said, 'Remember, mother, the promise you were enabled to lay hold of long ago, "All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children."'

"At another time, speaking on the same subject, she remarked, 'If ye parents being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' She then said, 'Oh God! are there not yet many prayers unanswered, that were

put up for us on earth, by our dear departed friends gone long ago?—*answer them now.*'

"She put up many prayers, with much fervent importunity, for all her friends, mentioning many of them by name; praying particularly that God might be glorified, in our meeting an unbroken, redeemed family, at his right hand, 'on that day, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.'

"At one time when wishing to turn her in bed, she said, 'Oh, mother, you have disturbed me; for I was just obtaining some glimpses of the King in his beauty!' At another time she said, 'Mother, I just put my hand into Christ's, and he as it were draws me up the hill.'

"Observing the servant in the room, she said, 'Oh Agnes, seek God in the days of youth; seek him in the day of health and strength: you will find a sick-bed no time to begin to seek Christ; it has enough to do with itself!'

"'I know I sought Christ early.' A few hours before her death a transient cloud passed over her mind; and, from extreme weakness, she was unable to speak for some time; but, upon the doctors administering some powerful stimulants, she regained her speech, and, though still suffering great pain, she said, 'Perfectly happy;' and continued frequently to utter the word, *happy*. As her strength revived, she remarked, 'These stimulants are only detaining me a little longer. What will they think of this in

heaven?' She then added, 'All is over now!' meaning there was no further hope of her recovery."

While her mother continued engaging shortly in prayer, and repeating portions of scripture, it was evident her whole soul responded, as she assisted in concluding each passage. After this, asking her mother to engage in prayer, she gave lively tokens of the fervency of spirit with which she joined: throughout her illness it was her constant request, "Mother, unite a little while in prayer with me." There were everal appropriate hymns which she repeated herself, and she often wished they might be read or repeated to her. The 85th Hymn of Hart's, she styled her favourite Hymn, often repeating it; and she did so at this time without any assistance:—

DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST ALONE.

If ever it could come to pass,
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day;
Were not thy love as firm as free,
Thou soon would'st take it, Lord, from me.

I on thy promises depend,
(At least I to depend desire),
That thou wilt love me to the end—
Be with me in temptation's fire;
Wilt for me work, and in me too,
And guide me right, and bring me through.

No other stay have I beside;
If these can alter I must fall;
I look to thee to be supplied,
With life, with will, with power, with all:
Rich souls may glory in their store,
But Jesus will relieve the poor.

As the closing scene approached, she distinctly repeated the five last verses of the 7th chapter of Revelation, beginning with "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," adding, But, mother, is there not something more said regarding heaven? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

A short time previous to her departure, observing the lady in whose house they were residing, weeping, she made a sign to her to take the handkerchief from her eyes, and said, "Weep not for me, but rather rejoice;" then turning her eyes towards her beloved mother and the sick-nurse, she exclaimed with much

emphasis, "All of you rejoice, for I am perfectly happy!" She then thanked the nurse for all her kind attentions. From exhaustion, it was with difficulty she finished the sentence.

Becoming weaker and weaker, it was not possible for those around to hear what she said; but, from the movement of her lips and the expression of her countenance, it was manifest that the soul was in close communion with her gracious God. Her last act was to raise her hand, and point first to the foot of the bed, then to each side, speaking; but her words could not be heard by her fellow-mortals so as to be understood by them. They were known by him "who is Lord of the dead and living;" who was calling her into his immediate presence, and with his holy angels waited to conduct her into another province of his vast domain,—to the heavenly mansions he had prepared for her reception. At this solemn moment she looked upwards, with an expression of unutterable delight, as if realising the opening glories, as faith was about to be swallowed up in perfect fruition; and as her ransomed spirit took its flight from the tabernacle of clay, the countenance became lighted up as with a beam from the sanctuary on high.

Her decease took place shortly after eleven o'clock P.M., 9th November 1842.

How fraught is the event with instruction to all, but especially to her young relatives and friends, who are admonished, by her state of mind and early

departure, to inquire how matters stand between their souls and the heart-searching Jehovah, whose omniscient eye penetrates into the most secret springs and operations of the heart, minutely inspecting all the thoughts, motives, intentions, and dispositions; observing all the words and actions, with the spiritual advantages enjoyed, and the talents which he has bestowed; and who will shortly require an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil!

Let the voice of tender affection be heard from her bed of languishing, entreating that the hours of youth may be dedicated to God, so that he may be served with the best and choicest season of life. Let the young be reminded by that voice, of their need of a Redeemer and Sanctifier, so that they may return to the Lord by the way he has opened—by the blood of Jesus—that being reconciled to him, they may walk with him through this evil world. Happy are those who know and serve the Lord from early youth, and are thus made useful during their whole lives—early piety leading to eminent piety. A saving interest in the Lord Jesus, makes earth, even amid its sins and its sorrows, a foretaste of heaven, communicating to the soul "joy unspeakable,"—sanctifies all the relations of life, enhances and refines all its enjoyments, and ensures comfort in living and safety in dying. Let none delay a single moment in coming to Christ for the Divine healing which he only can impart: "He waits to be

gracious;" "his Spirit is striving;" his word and his providence declare that "the time of visitation" is rapidly passing; "that now is the accepted time; now the day of salvation." Pardon, peace, and all happiness, are now to be found in Christ for the asking; for he says. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Alison could say, while walking through the valley of the shadow of death, that she knew she had sought the Lord early; and she realised the preciousness of the promise in which, in secret prayer, he first revealed himself as a Saviour every way suited to her: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

What would her youth, her personal beauty, her amiable dispositions, her fascinating manners, her manifold accomplishments, which secured to her the love and admiration of a large circle of attached relatives and friends, have availed her, had she not known the Lord, in whom she believed, "as the portion of her soul," when, at the early age of twenty-two, she was unexpectedly, and when absent from home, summoned to meet the last messenger? Though surrounded by every thing that was likely to attract the youthful mind to present things, she hesitated not to obey the call, and found, when standing on the brink of eternity, the world, with all its transitory concerns, dwindle into emptiness, before the opening glories of immortality. Her bodily

distress served only to render things unseen more bright and desirable, so that not one lingering look was cast behind, nor a single wish felt or expressed to remain longer amid the conflicts, temptations, and sins of this world. The attractions of the eternal world raised her affections above this, and made her long to depart, as she looked to a reconciled Father, —a Saviour, once crucified but now exalted,—holy angels,—and the company of the redeemed, all waiting to welcome her to everlasting habitations, to put into her hands the palm of victory, and to place on her head the unfading crown of righteousness.

All that was lovely in Alison while living, and all that was peaceful and happy in her when dying, was the effect of sovereign grace, equally needed by all her young friends, and equally free to each of them.

Let the voice from the early tomb of Alison be listened to as it says emphatically, "Be ye also ready. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure; redeeming the time;" and then, as was the case with her, "the day of death will be found to be better than the day of birth."

CHAPTER VIII.

The bereaved mother, sorrowful yet rejoicing—Her bodily exhaustion—Commencement of her illness—Its progress—Her death-bed—Strong faith, and triumphant hope—Reflections on her death, and that of her daughter—Estimate of her character—Concluding remarks.

Mrs Johnstone, upon the death of Alison, "though cast down, was not destroyed." Deep called unto deep, and all the waves and billows of a mother's keenest anguish passed over her while she realised the pangs of separation from the child of her love. Yet this afflicted one, tossed with a tempest of feeling, known only to such bereaved mothers, refused not to be comforted. In the midst of the storm she listened to the voice, "Be still, and know that I am God;" meekly responding, "Our God is in the heavens, what pleased him he hath done." Hence it was, that before she sought any rest for her exhausted frame, she joined with her remaining daughter, and the other members of the household where she was residing, in pouring out a heart deeply humbled under the chastening that had come from a Father's love; thus turning to him that had smitten, who "maketh sore and bindeth up," who

"woundeth, and his hands make whole;" acknowledging his sovereign right to dispose of her, and of all dear to her, as seemed good in his sight, and full of adoring thanksgiving for the signal display of mercy and grace vouchsafed to her beloved Alison.

On the 11th November, the second day after Alison's death, Mrs Johnstone returned to Willow Park; and, on her arrival, she met, in her usual calm and subdued spirit, her sorrowing domestics, and the family of her departed sister, who glorified God because of the grace exhibited in her submission to the Divine will, and in the whole of her deportment.

The remains of Alison arrived on the evening of the 12th. Even at that trying time, the composure of Mrs Johnstone was that of christian resignation and heavenly hope. She felt that though her daughter would no more reciprocate the smile of love, yet she enjoyed what was far better—the smiles of the beatific vision.

It was the Sabbath that followed; and it was found to be a day of rest and refreshing to Mrs Johnstone, in which she had a renewed sense of the blessedness of union to Christ Jesus, "the resurrection and the life," and of communion with the Father and Fountain of life through him.

She sought to catch some of the notes of that new song to which the harp of her beloved Alison was tuned. But while this was the case, she was not unmindful of the duties she owed to the members of

her family still with her; spending part of that hallowed day in endeavouring to improve, for their benefit, the solemn circumstances in which they were placed. Having long experienced that "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting," she was full of anxious concern, that each individual under her roof, as well as her surviving children, might be instructed in every lesson the Lord designed to teach them by the visitation that had removed one of their number, so justly dear to them all, and that, in her unlooked-for departure, the voice of God might be heard saying, "But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

Monday came, the day appointed for committing to its lowly bed all that was mortal of the lovely Alison; and Mrs Johnstone, wishful to bear testimony to the gracious dealings of her heavenly Father, though far from well in body, *rose* that she might perform the duties connected with the solemn occasion, and receive the relatives and friends expected from a distance.

All who saw her perceived that the spirit she breathed was, "Father, nevertheless not my will but thine be done." She had faith's eye upon her Saviour, Jesus Christ, "who hath abolished death," and who by having lain in the grave, has made it a sweet resting-place for the bodies of his people, till "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the

trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." She thought of the body, "sown in dishonour, raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power;" of him "who shall change the vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" and of the perfection of bliss which will be reached, when the King will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and by such blessed prospects she endeavoured to comfort herself and those around her.

For some days she struggled to continue at the post of duty, esteeming it a special privilege to receive the sympathising calls of affectionate christian friends, and afraid lest she might prove a discouragement to any of them, by leading them to suppose from her being in bed, that she was indulging undue grief, when she had such abundant cause to speak of the loving-kindness of a covenant God, in the remarkable display of his "goodness and mercy" shown to her beloved Alison in her passage through the dark valley. Spiritual consolation abounded to this patient sufferer, converting her afflictions into a cup of holy joy, which made her anxious to speak to others that their faith might be invigorated, and their hope encouraged, and that they might join with her in magnifying the grace which "out of weakness made her strong."

As the week drew to a close, her exhaustion of body increased. On the evening of Friday, as her

surviving daughter was retiring to rest, her mother said, "My dear Ann, when you see me again, your heart shall rejoice, and my joy no man taketh from me." From her repeating the passage in this way, Miss Johnstone felt that her mother wished her to understand, or rather to be assured, that she was rejoicing in Christ.

Feeling still weaker on Saturday, Mrs Johnstone said, "Ann, it is well for me that I was upon my watch-tower looking out;" by which she obviously meant to intimate, that death would not take her by surprise; and as she lay with her eyes closed, she repeatedly uttered aloud the words, "Triumphing in the blood of the Lamb."

The disease had made such progress on Sabbath, that the medical attendant had the painful duty to discharge of intimating to her family, that there was little or no hope of recovery. During the night of Monday, Mrs Johnstone spoke with great animation to her family and near relatives who stood round her bed to witness, as they believed, her last moments, and listen to her last words. One of her nieces wrote down all she could of these sayings, as her beloved aunt was heard to utter them. They are as follows:—

Addressing her eldest son, she said, "James, there is many a battle to be fought, but Christ is all-sufficient.

"Tell all my christian friends my 'latter end is peace.' Am I not in a very desirable state?

My heart and flesh do faint and fail,
But God doth fail me never:
For of my heart God is the strength,
And portion for ever.

"Christ said, 'It is finished.' O how little do we think of Christ! how ashamed may we be at his coming, to think how little we have thought of him!

"Ann, you are naturally timid, but remember Christ came to gather the lambs in his bosom.*

"I ought," she said, "to humble myself in the dust for many failures and shortcomings in duty; but yet I can say with the apostle, 'I thank God who giveth me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.'" Psalm xli. and 3d being read to her, "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" she added with emphasis, "*And so he has;* I am just waiting with patience till the Lord calls me. What are the joys of this world?

* This was said to a niece who, little more than six months afterwards, was safely and peacefully gathered to the fold of the good Shepherd, in that happy land where the inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick;" the people that dwell therein having been forgiven their iniquity. Throughout her protracted illness, this interesting young lady exhibited a sweet and cheerful resignation to the Divine will, with a humble dependence on the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a continued clinging to the cross. Leaning on the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit, she perceived the impurity and imperfection of her own righteousness, yet was enabled to rejoice in the glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, and displayed the spiritual beauty derived from his grace and Spirit, in which Christ so greatly delights, as being the reflection of his own holiness.

"None of you must mourn for me, but rejoice; and O may we all be an unbroken family in heaven! Tell every one of our friends to have the worship of God in their families; the blessing of God cannot rest upon them without it. Tell my dear cousins, Mrs —— and Miss S—— to

"Trust in the Lord, for ever trust,
And banish all your fears;
Strength in the Lord Jehovah dwells
Eternal as his years."

"Tell them I am trusting amid my great weakness.

"It was Alison's great joy that uncle —— was coming to Christ. The same God that brought Alison can bring him too. Tell him to cry to Christ. There are two great rocks, self-righteousness and unbelief, that stand in the way, but Christ can pilot him through.

"The Lord hath done great things for me, and will do great things. I desire that to me to live may be Christ, and to die unspeakable gain.

"I am willing to take these stimulants, if thereby I may be strengthened to see a few of my chosen christian friends. I hope I will yet see Mrs ——

"God is a God of rectitude: in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your steps.

"None but Christ, none but Christ—triumphing through the blood of the Lamb! He is a God that doeth wonders. It will be but a short time and he that shall come will come, and not tarry.

"The Lord deals gently with me.

"For this God is my God for ever and ever: he will be my guide even unto death.

"Shine forth, O thou that dwellest between the cherubims!

"Saved by grace, free grace, and nothing else."

In the end of the previous week, Mrs Johnstone had expressed a desire to have one or two christian friends sent for; but, as they resided at some distance, her family, clinging fondly to the hope of recovery, delayed sending. Finding early in the morning of Tuesday, however, that their beloved mother had revived a little, at her dying request they dispatched messengers for two friends, whom she named, and who both instantly obeyed the summons; and the account that follows of the three memorable days during which Mrs Johnstone lingered, as it were, on Jordan's brink, is taken from their united recollections of what they were so highly privileged to witness, noted down by each of them after the departure of their much-valued friend.

One of the friends being taken into Mrs Johnstone's chamber, watched anxiously for an opportunity of hearing some words spoken by lips to all appearance soon to be sealed in death; and in a short time, Mrs Johnstone wishing a drink, her friend's name was mentioned as being present, and she was instantly recognised. Going to the side of the bed, and referring to the river of the water of

life, immediately Mrs Johnstone brightened up, and the strong and emphatic response which she gave, showed how very deeply she was even now drinking of that blessed river. It was next said to her, "I am He that liveth and was dead;" to which she replied, "The living One," and "because I live, ye shall live also." Many other precious passages were thus either begun or partly repeated by her. Then she said, "Show Mrs —— Alison's hymn—give it to her to read." She proceeded to say, "That was my Alison's favourite hymn, and I was so struck when first she repeated it to me during her illness. Oh! Mrs ——, my lassie had a bright, bright manifestation; pray, pray that He may so reveal himself to me." It was said, He has already done so to you. "Aye," she said, "but not so brightly as He did to Alison."

Shortly after this the other friend arrived, and was conducted to Mrs Johnstone's bedside, when she took hold of her friend's hand, pressing it as strongly as her extreme weakness would allow, and said, "My dear Mrs ——, many, many sweet hours have we spent together. It is profitable, and a precious means of grace, thus to spend time. I used to feel it so kind in my dear husband to arrange his engagements so considerately as to allow me to enjoy such sweet privileges. She then referred with much feeling to the little fellowship meetings, where, as she said, "we had often been made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "They," she

said, "were seasons of spiritual refreshing—some of our happiest hours were spent there."

She then asked that her eyes might be washed with a small sponge. The affectionate domestic in attendance said, "Did you wish this that you might be better able to see your friend?" "Yes," was her reply. Then, while looking up with a countenance beaming with christian love and tenderness, it was said to her, we used to be all astonished at your excellent sight. To this remark, she replied, with much cheerfulness, "I never required to use glasses, and I will never need them now." It was evident to all in the room that her eyes would soon be closed, while the eye of the mind, under the gracious illumination of the Holy Spirit, was strengthening and enlarging—becoming more prepared to behold the full blaze of the beatific vision.

In a little after this, Mrs Johnstone turned her head to that side of the bed where portions of scripture had been formerly repeated to her, and said, with a voice full of touching interest, "Mrs ——, help me." O what a reality did there appear at this moment to be in the word of the living God! Here was a dying believer, overwhelmed with weakness and suffering, turning not to medicine, not to cordials, not to man, but to the Word for help, and it was delightfully manifest that at this time she did feel whose this word is, for she shortly after distinctly added: "This God is our God; he will be our guide even unto death, and through death, and through

eternity." Yes, it was said to her, for there the Lamb shall lead them, and guide them; "O aye!" was her heartfelt reply. In a little after this, she said, "Will you join in prayer as we used to do, only shortly at a time, as I am weak, very weak." She then requested that all the household, who could, might be present, to join when prayer was offered up by her bed.

Throughout the whole of this day, the word of God was evidently her meat and drink; and although she spoke with difficulty, yet there was an intelligence, a connexion in all she said, which was truly remarkable. In allusion to a christian friend who had died a year before, she said, "The Lord commanded for Mr S—— an abundant peace." Prayer was again wished by her, and upon being asked whether she had any particular desire she wished to present, with much fervour she replied, "that the Lord would manifest himself in the same bright, bright way, he did to my dear lassie, for her's was a bright manifestation."

Frequently she said, I wish you to tell all mothers, for their encouragement, what great things the Lord hath done for my dear Alison. I have much, very much to tell, if my weakness would only allow me. Say to the dear mothers to keep pleading every day the covenant promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," and assuredly they will find, as I have done in rich experience, "that he is not only a covenant-making, but faithful covenant-keeping God."

Throughout the night of Tuesday, Mrs Johnstone got more rest than had been expected, and it was very evident that the soul as well as the body, was being refreshed. Upon her once awaking, it was said to her, "He giveth his beloved sleep." "O aye! O aye!" she said, with an emphasis it is impossible to describe.

Wednesday morning, feeling considerably lightened, she observed on turning her eyes to the light streaming into her room, by one of the doors leading into it, that the sun shone brightly, and she immediately said, "Open the window, that I may once more behold the sun;" and as its rays shone full into the apartment, she said, "O what a beautiful morning!" then repeated with much feeling, "But unto you that fear the Lord, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing under his wings;" adding, "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Those present will not forget the expression of her countenance, as she slowly repeated these scripture texts, and prayed with so much solemn earnestness, that the Lord would hasten the accomplishment of such glorious predictions respecting the latter days of the church. Mrs Johnstone then insisted that her daughter would go and take a drive, and urged her sons, as they had been so much confined of late, to go out and take

advantage of the fine day for the benefit of their health: a touching proof how sensitively she was alive to the comfort of others, while suffering so much exhaustion herself.

Her dear minister who was from home on official duties, on hearing of her distress, kindly addressed a letter to her, which abounded with spiritual truth, suited to her time of trial. It lay upon her pillow, and was occasionally read to her. She expressed much pleasure in hearing it, receiving its contents as a reviving cordial.

During the forenoon, when the 11th of 1st Corinthians from the 23d verse was repeated to her, she appeared to have high enjoyment, responding, as it were, with her whole soul to every sentence, and then exclaimed, with great emphasis, "Eat, O friends, drink! yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

Several times she said, "Did I not tell you last spring that He would, in some remarkable way, come towards this family in his dealings, whereby He would make himself heard by every member? and has the Lord not come in a most striking and wonderful manner, both as regards Alison, and in his way of removing me?" The avidity with which she thirsted after the word of God, must be witnessed to be understood. At one time she tried to convey to us the fulness which she saw in the river of life, after describing her own intense thirst; and alluding to her having spilled her drink some nights before, she said, "Oh how full, how wonderful did

that fountain appear—it will never be dried—nothing can exhaust it!"

At another time she would speak of the illness of her dear Alison, and tell of the wonders of grace and mercy done for her, until her faultering tongue could no longer articulate.

She was asked in the evening if she had any thing more to say to an individual who was about to leave her. "No," she replied, "except my blessing, if the blessing of a poor worm can do any good; but O be *faithful* to souls!—be *faithful* to souls! It was an *astounding word* which my dear Alison said to me, when I went into Edinburgh, 'Oh, mother, be faithful to my soul;' and after a struggle, she had a bright manifestation."

As the night of Wednesday approached, Mrs Johnstone's sufferings increased, and, to the appearance of all, the cold hand of death was upon her. She had a severe struggle, and for a length of time the whole household stood around her bed, looking for her last moment. Nothing could rouse, nothing excite her, until again the reviving words were spoken, "I am the living one. Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen."

Those who witnessed it, will remember the effect of "the word" at this time—the moving hand, the shake of the head, the attempt to articulate. Sometimes she was able to say, "repeat again,"—all, all testifying that the work and witness of the Spirit

within had a real correspondence with the word of that same Spirit *without.*

After some hours, our beloved friend began to come out of the distress; and during the night which followed, her utterance of broken sentences was truly like a voice from the unseen world. Among her first expressions, she said, "Let patience have its perfect work,—patience,—deliverance,—I am weary, weary,"—"come, *my* beloved, my beloved, be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether,—come quickly,—yet a little time, and he shall come." "I am leaving you in a stormy world, in a stormy church,—this is a gathering time,—the Lord is taking home his own." "Take that passage," she said, turning to one near her bed, "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, shut the doors about you." To another, "Seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

After a short sleep she awoke, saying, "O that He may be glorified!" and whatever question was put to her, this, for a time, was the reply—"O that God may be glorified in me, in my family, in all mine!" It was evident that now all her desires were lost, swallowed up, in this.

Often she said, "A poor God-robbing creature I have been: a God-robbing creature; but I gave myself to Him in the days of my youth." "Well then," it was said, "I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant."

The words "Hosannah in the highest!" "Hallelujah!" were often uttered by our friend during this eventful night, and gave a heavenly impression to the scene which no words can convey to others. At another time, after a quiet moment, as if resting that she might gain a little strength, she would exclaim, "Glory, glory, glory be to his Holy name!" and, again, "Grace, grace, grace reigning through righteousness!"

Those who were in the room with Mrs Johnstone during this solemn night, will ever remember it as being a season when the great Jehovah did, in a peculiar manner, make known the reality of His approach to the soul of a dying ransomed sinner, in a way convincing and self-evidencing to sound reason, and calm, rational, scriptural feeling.

When the light of the morning began to break, Mrs Johnstone, through the nourishment which she had taken, was much revived. Anxious that this strength might be employed in speaking to her dear children, her youngest son, entering her apartment at this moment, was beckoned to come round to the side of the bed at which his mother lay, and take hold of her hand. Then it was said to her, "This is your own dear John." "Oh!" said she, "my dear John, come and see what a solemn thing it is to die! Come and see death in its *very easiest form*, John, *in its easiest form*, for this is it: and Oh! my dear, what an awful thing it would be to have to meet it otherwise! Then," she added, "Seek an

interest in the Lord Jesus; seek it with earnest prayer, and you will as surely find it, as dear Alison found in secret prayer, at the foot of my bed, that whosoever comes to Christ, He will in no wise cast out."

By this time her eldest son had come into the room, and standing by his brother, had taken the other hand of his mother. He said, "This is your dear James: have you anything to say to him." She replied, "Behold—he—cometh—with—clouds —and—every—eye—shall see him!"

Some one began to repeat a passage of scripture, when the friend nearest the bed whispered, "Let no voice be heard but that of the dying mother's." Every other sound seemed rather to take from the sacred solemnity of a scene so full of unutterable interest. On that bed was the loving mother, "walking through the valley of the shadow of death," holding the hand of each of her sons—the children of so many hopes and fears, solicitudes and prayers—speaking to them her last words, pouring over them her last blessings, her last expressions of love—spending her expiring strength in commending to them that Divine Redeemer, who had tasted death, and removed its bitterest dregs—a Redeemer who was banishing from her mind all disquieting thoughts, all distracting fears; was gently leading her out of the world with all the joyful presages of eternal rest and peace, and ministering to her "an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom and glory."

In a little after this, Mrs Johnstone said, "Let every one leave the room while I speak with my children alone;" and then, what an hour followed! No eye saw, nor ear heard, but those of her beloved family; and as her last counsels to them, her words are registered in heaven.

When her friends were again recalled to her room, it was said, "You have been sent back, as it were, from the very threshold of glory, that you might deliver a message to your beloved children; and surely there is much cause of thanksgiving, that you have been so remarkably strengthened in declaring it to them." "Oh yes!" she replied, and raising her hand, she added, with deep emotion, "And it will be to their eternal condemnation if they do not receive it."

Her son James, who, with the utmost tenderness, was ever ready to assist in changing her posture, standing by his mother's side, reminded her of the promise she had so long pleaded in behalf of her children: "And they shall all be taught of God, and great shall be their peace." She then raised both her hands, and her lips moved, but no words were heard. It was evident that it was the believing mother, breathing out her last prayers for the children of her love, leaving them upon the care of her covenant God, seeking that her death-bed instructions, as well as those daily tendered during her life, might be sanctified for the spiritual life, renovation, and growth in grace of each of them.

Some time after this it was mentioned to Mrs Johnstone, that a letter was about to be sent to the dear christian sister who had taken so deep and tender an interest in the illness of her beloved Alison, and had written so many letters respecting it; and she was asked if she had any message to send. With much feeling she replied, "Say to dear ——, I shall never be able to express the debt of gratitude I owe to her for all her prayerful sympathy, and especially for the pains she took in writing and stirring up the prayers of others in our behalf. Tell her also, that the Lord deals very gently with me; that you are here, and are to remain with me to the end; and I pray that my reconciled God and Father may abundantly bless and reward her." It was then said, "Give our dear friend a word from Himself to remember you." Mrs Johnstone distinctly uttered the following words, making an effort to raise her voice, "May the Lord be to her a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Wishing to be turned to the other side of the bed, she said to the faithful domestic, who was unwearied in her kind attentions, "Tell my dear James to come and assist you." Then she gave directions how it might most easily be done, both for herself and them; desiring that a towel should be folded and put under her shoulders, and then, by taking hold of it, they would be better able to move her. Hear-

ing them ask me to take part with them, she positively refused to allow it, saying two or three times, "No, no; she is not strong; it will hurt her;" thus, in a most affecting manner, proving how calm, collected, and self-possessed she was amidst sufferings so great, as well as showing, in a most touching way, her disinterested care of others to the last.

At this period, a young mother, a dear relative, came to see her, to whom she spoke a few words. She seemed much pleased while listening to this lady, as she repeated a part of the delightful verses which begin with, "Fear not, I am with thee." Mrs Johnstone then breathed out, in a low tone, an earnest prayer for this friend, her husband, and little ones.

Before this, at different times, she had spoken individually to each of her attached servants, commending Christ to them, and showing herself to be anxiously concerned that each of them, as well as her children, might be found on "the right hand of the Judge on that day;" and, as sinners saved by grace, might enjoy together, in "the house not made with hands," an eternal companionship, sinking deeper and deeper into his debt, "who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Servants, strangers, all who spoke with our beloved friend during these last days, must have been constrained to say, "Verily it shall be well with the righteous." Before three o'clock P.M., she fell into

a sweet sleep; once she was roused to take a little wine, and again she slept so sweetly and naturally, that it was difficult to conceive death to be so near. Again Mrs Johnstone was roused that she might take a little more wine, and when we succeeded in getting her to receive it, she said distinctly, "Patience,—patience,—perfect—work." Her voice failed; from midnight until six o'clock she was watched, and her mouth and lips were wetted with some refreshing cordial. About that time she ceased to breathe.

To those who witnessed the scene of surpassing privilege which was presented by the death-bed of Mrs Johnstone, the fulfilment of the promise was distinctly made manifest, "Him that honoureth me I will honour."

Though she had a deep sense of her vileness and exceeding sinfulness, and felt that she had been a God-robbing creature all her days, yet the eye of her faith rested so firmly on the glorified law, on the justifying righteousness, and finished salvation, wrought out and brought in by the blessed Surety of the covenant, that not a single cloud passed over her sanctified soul, nor was the "accuser of the brethren" suffered to disturb or to distract her spiritual exercises. Frequently she acknowledged, with thanksgiving, that, in amazing loving-kindness, it was given her to enjoy a cloudless sky, and that the light of the Divine favour, illuminated her path

through every step of the dark valley of the shadow of death.

Passive in the hand of her covenant God, adoring his faithfulness, and resigning herself with cheerful, child-like, and believing confidence to him as her Lord and Saviour, she was sure of victory, and was not only a conqueror over the last enemy, but triumphed through him that loved her; being "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor any other creature, would be able to separate her from the love of God."

Oh! how affecting was it to behold a body prostrated, and rapidly sinking into corruption, and yet the spirit so signally upheld! thus furnishing a vivid illustration of the statement, "the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

Respecting her beloved daughter, Mrs Johnstone remarked what was strikingly applicable to herself: "You used to think my Alison lovely in living; but ah! she was far more lovely in dying; for I never saw so much corruption and so much loveliness blended together."

The solemn interest of a season so rich in spiritual instructions must be witnessed to be in any degree understood. Before us lay a child of adoption, about to receive the end of her faith and the object of all her desires, as a bride adorned for the heavenly Bridegroom, who being long since betrothed to him, was now, by his Spirit, being prepared for obeying

his call,—"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." With tender emotion, and eyes filled with tears, we looked upon our much-valued friend, as she was passing from us to go to be with her best Friend, to be admitted into the King's palace, a welcome guest at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, to share for ever in the joy and honour of this sacred union in His kingdom and glory.

The deceptive shadows of this poor world did seem to flee away as the veil that hangs over invisible things was, as it were, for a little drawn aside, and as some glimpses of the holy of holies were obtained; while faith realised the majesty of Godhead, perfecting the work of grace, and pouring light and life into the soul of our friend, as she was entering upon the perfect vision and full enjoyment of God in Christ, the everlasting Fountain of knowledge and bliss. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Mrs Johnstone's departure took place on Friday morning, November 25, 1842, little more than a fortnight after the removal of her beloved Alison. Mother and daughter were thus soon happily united in the uninterrupted, unalloyed peace and felicity of the city of our God.

Could they now address those dearly-loved relatives and friends left in the body, would their lan-

guage not be—"And we desire that every one of ye do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises?" Rest not till you have made your "calling and election sure." It is only by being found in Christ, by living and abiding in him, that you can be conformed to him in his death, and have the blessed hope of attaining with him the resurrection from the dead, and of being present with him in glory.

Let us who are left behind be encouraged "to follow on to know the Lord," by what of the work and walk of faith in living, as well as of the triumph of faith in dying, we were privileged to witness in this believing mother and daughter. Every remembrance of them should be improved in endearing to us that ever living and exalted Redeemer, who was their unfailing Friend in life and in death, and who has promised to be with those who walk in their footsteps in as far as they were, through grace, enabled to follow him in his.

Surely we cannot think of them without feeling that heaven is invested with a higher interest. While the First-born among the brethren gives to this blessed place its chief attraction in the eyes of all who are really His, still this is not inconsistent with our feeling a deeper interest in the better world, when those dear to us have gone to it. Reason and scripture forbid the thought that their love to us is

in the least diminished. We saw no diminution of it as they drew nearer the confines of heaven, and as its light and joy were, with brightening influence, shed down upon their souls. On the contrary, even when the tongue ceased to whisper the accents of love, the smile of love still played upon the countenance, and the hand of love became more affectionate in its embraces. We cannot suppose that the splendours of the celestial city, as they burst upon their view, would have the effect of quenching their love to us, if we are among the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. So far from this being the case, we are to regard their love to the brethren as refined into the purity of heaven, and characterised by its perfect tenderness. How delightful the thought! If there was such a warmth of love in parting, how inexpressibly greater will it be when we meet!—a warmth of love having the additional charm, that it will be unaccompanied with parting sorrows.

With what joy will the pilgrims, who have tasted the sweetness of the land at which they have arrived in safety, welcome their fellow-pilgrims when they come from the toils of the pilgrimage! and with what unbounded delight will they, under the smiles of the Saviour, worship, and feast, and exult together!

Thus, in compliance with promise, I have attempted to give a short outline of the life and deathbed exercises of a Christian mother, and her beloved

daughter; but the meagreness of these reminiscences, and the very inadequate idea which they convey of what rich and sovereign grace did for both,—is matter of deep regret. Faint, however, as the outline is, the humble effort will have a rich reward, if, through the divine blessing, it keep before the mind's eye what of the Spirit of Christ they were both enabled to exemplify.

The friends of Mrs Johnstone will all give testimony to the fact that her religion was not that of mere system, but was a vital principle and habit of the soul—Christ in her the hope of glory—Divine truths, doctrines, precepts, and promises, inwrought into the whole framework of her mind and temper. She had a keen perception of the truth of the saying, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and knew well the exercise of daily repentance, genuine sorrow, and self-abasement before God, on account of failures, shortcomings, and defects, which others think little of, and with which the Searcher of hearts alone is acquainted. She felt that if the graces of the Spirit did not grow and flourish, there must be some latent cause which called for serious self-examination—thus ever fearing, lest in anything she might be led to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit.

Her piety was as habitual as it was deep, and was illustrated by every event in life. While all the graces of the new creature shone with peculiar brightness, humility, a principal ingredient in spiri-

tual beauty, formed in her a predominating feature. In lowliness of mind, she ever esteemed others better than herself—in all things counting herself an unprofitable servant; saying, "we have only to look in to be humbled, and filled with self-loathing; but we must look out to the cross, and to Him who hung upon it, to be pardoned and comforted."

Her virtues were those of a meek, gentle, affectionate, cheerful, social, and unostentatious piety. Wherever she went, a sweet savour of His name, which is as ointment poured forth, was diffused by her blameless conversation and continual breathing forth of holy affections, blended with tender concern to lead others to an acquaintance with her beloved Saviour. Being filled with admiration of his excellencies, she longed for the spiritual illumination of all over whom she had any influence, that they might join with her in magnifying the name of the Lord.

Manifold testimonies to her uniform consistency and christian excellence were poured in upon her bereaved family, in expressions of heartfelt sympathy, and in precious letters of christian condolence, from ministers and other valued friends; and so deep was the impression made upon the eminent physician, who attended during dear Alison's illness in Edinburgh, that, upon receiving the announcement of Mrs Johnstone's death, he said to a lady present, that he had never before witnessed the power of Divine grace so remarkably displayed as in both mother and daughter.

A gifted servant of Christ writes: "What have

the church, the world, the friends, the family of Mrs Johnstone lost, and what a loss has Greenock sustained, by her death!—a widow, indeed—a true Dorcas. May her surviving children choose that God who was their mother's God and refuge, and through faith in his Son, direct their hearts to that blessed world where mother and sister find their everlasting rest."

Numerous extracts to the same effect might be recorded, expressive of the universal bereavement felt by the whole circle in which she moved, each feeling as if one had lost a friend.

What gratitude ought to fill our hearts for that grace, which was most abundant to them when they most needed it! and how should our own faith be increased, in the blessed prospect that He who sustained them will also sustain us, and be the strength of our heart and our portion for ever! for, as another devoted minister of the cross writes, "Mrs Johnstone's consolations must be ours—we should be drinking the water of life sweetly and abundantly, for although she, and millions more, have drunk and been glad, the fountain still overflows."

For Mrs Johnstone's surviving children and household, many prayers continue to be presented by the associations with which she was so long and so usefully connected; and to them has been left the solemn and responsible legacy of her example and prayers. May this continue to exert a salutary influence over them, and may they be enabled so to

improve all their great privileges, and so to live to the praise of the Divine Redeemer, as that, when they come to depart from time, they may experience peace, joy, and hope similar to hers, and have a glorious entrance granted to them into the kingdom of their God and Saviour, thus realising their beloved mother's fondest wish—meeting a "family unbroken in heaven!"

APPENDIX.

No. I.

A FEW brief extracts are subjoined, of letters received from Mrs Johnstone in 1836 and 1837; but as has already been remarked, writing was not her talent. Still in the few sentences that follow, her habitual recognition of, and dependence upon, her covenant God are shown.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,— * * * May our gracious God accompany with his blessing the means employed for delivering you from your present trial. * * Blessed be God all our times, and the circumstances connected with them, are wholly in his hand, and as a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's permission, how much less, my dear friend, can anything afflict you, 'whom he keeps as the apple of his eye,' without his knowledge and appointment. * * He hath promised to withhold no good thing from those that fear him, which is a compre-

hensive promise, securing every thing that is requisite to their comfortable passage through this world. When visible means fail, their God will find out some way or other to succour them, all events being under his control, and all hearts in his hand, and rather than his people should want necessaries, he can open the windows of heaven and rain down bread, or command the ravens to feed them. In all their difficulties, he will lend his gracious aid to assist, helping them over, and bringing them through. * * In turning our eyes towards the sea on this stormy day, we see vessels driven from their moorings; but I rejoice, my dear friend, this cannot be the case with you, for, having by the grace of God, cast anchor on the Rock of Ages, you shall undoubtedly be enabled to ride out in safety all the storms of life, whatever sense, or Satan, may at times suggest to the contrary. O that we could ever remember that our blessed Saviour is the finisher as well as the author of our faith! This would put to flight many of our unbelieving fears. * * That our God may soon compass you and your dear partner about with songs of deliverance, is the earnest prayer of your much attached."

"GREENOCK, 13th December 1836.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,— * * * I know you will rejoice to hear that we have got our dear girls comfortably settled with Mrs K——,

whose school was so strongly recommended by our excellent friend, Mr S——, and that her character in every respect surpasses the favourable opinion we had formed of her. She appears to be a solid Christian, and wonderfully qualified to recommend religion to the young by her uniform cheerfulness. Alison writes, that she is quite delighted with Mrs K——, and also with all the other inmates of the house, and that both herself and Ann are as happy as the day is long. They have the privilege of hearing two most faithful ministers, who are doing a great duty to their charge. In all this, my dear friend, there is fresh cause for grateful praise. Here then, would I again raise an 'Ebenezer, and say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' Great indeed was his goodness and mercy in preserving us from all evil in our journey to and from London at this stormy season of the year. O that our God would write the law of gratitude for ever on my heart, and on the heart of every one of my family! * * I had the pleasure of hearing your letter read at our meeting. * * I sincerely desire that your health and worldly circumstances may prosper even as your soul prospereth. * * Our dear mothers depend on my informing you of the passage of scripture for this month, it was given by my neighbour, Mrs ——. 2 Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' O that all of us may be enabled so to walk until we arrive at that happy land where there is no more need of this precious grace, it being

turned into most blissful fruition. * * * I ever am, my dear friend, yours affectionately, in best bonds."

"Greenock, 24th February 1837.

"My Dearly Beloved Friend,— * * * I know you are anxious to hear, as to the state of my dear husband's health. I dare not say he is any better. His complaint is thought to be tic doloreux, which is both of a very painful and tedious nature, but we are in the hands of a gracious Father, whose love and wisdom are infinite, and I trust he is sanctifying it to my dear husband, and will in his good time bring him out of this furnace, as gold seven times tried. I am quite sensible from the support and comfort we have experienced, that we are much indebted to you and other christian friends for remembering us at a throne of grace. The Lord continue his kindness to us, and reward you a hundredfold. Mr Johnstone's mind is truly in an interesting state. He is full of gratitude, and deeply alive to his utter unworthiness of the many mercies we enjoy, but above all for Christ, 'God's unspeakable gift.'

"I desire, my dear friend, tenderly to sympathise with you, on the death of your dear father, but as our gracious God now offers himself in this new and endearing relation, may you, in happy experience be made to know that he is indeed the 'Father of the fatherless.' I hear from my girls frequently, they are well, and much pleased with Mrs K——, and

have many kind friends in London. * *
There are many subjects I could wish to enter upon, but have time only to express my continued desire, that you and your dear partner may enjoy all the good of the covenant, which includes every blessing for time and eternity,—and ever and ever, my very dear friend, yours affectionately."

"GREENOCK, 22d April 1837.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,— * *
I feel quite ashamed at being so long in answering your valuable letter, but have much to do at present in this way, as it is natural for the friends of my dear husband, to wish to know the particulars of his illness and death. I shall not, however, enter upon this subject at present, hoping soon to enjoy the pleasure of a visit from you, as Port-Glasgow sacrament is on the first Sabbath of May. If it is in your power to spend some time with me then, I trust we shall enjoy much delightful fellowship, in looking back on all the way, the Lord our gracious heavenly Father hath been leading us since we parted, and again renewing our covenant with him who, amidst all the trying changes through which we are, or may be called to pass, is still the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, mindful of his holy covenant. I trust, my beloved friend, although I can call nothing my own but sin, yet, through his rich grace, I can sing of mercy and of judgment in all that has ever befallen me, and I know well that you can say the same. What

infinite condescension for our God to say, The Lord's people is his portion, Jacob the lot of his inheritance! They need fear no evil who can say in faith, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.' * * I have had many letters from my dear girls of late. In them they desire to be affectionately remembered to you. In one of my letters to them, I mentioned how much strength I had received according to my time of need, in answer to the prayers of dear christian friends, to which they replied, they had experienced the same, for that promise had been most wonderfully fulfilled to them, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.' I rejoiced greatly when I read this, for it was the same promise which was made my stay and support in my present trial, as well as in former seasons of affliction. O my dear friend, it is indeed good to trust in God. I have been enabled to put my dear children, as well as myself, under his gracious care and keeping, trusting he will be to us 'A Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow.'—In the pleasant hope of seeing you soon, I ever am, affectionately yours, in best terms."

No. II.

The following are the Rules of the Maternal Association, to which reference is made in the Memoir, and of which Mrs JOHNSTONE was the first President:—

OBJECT AND PLAN.

THE MATERNAL ASSOCIATION is composed of Mothers, Married Women, and Guardians, who are desirous of awakening in their own minds a deeper feeling of parental responsibility—of promoting an habitual observance of the Divine precepts, and realising the fulfilment of the Divine promise.—Proverbs xxii. 6; Ephesians vi. 4.

As a means of promoting these objects, Meetings are held on the First Thursday of every Month, for mutual advice, combined experience, and united prayer. A Quarterly Meeting of the Association is held, at which the Children of the Members assemble for the purpose of engaging in such religious exercises as are best calculated to instruct their minds, and interest their feelings. On these occasions the assistance of suitable ministers is obtained.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS AND THEIR CHILDREN.

It is the duty of every member to qualify herself by reading, prayer, and self-discipline, for the faithful discharge of the arduous duties of a Christian Mother, and to communicate freely such hints upon the various subjects brought before the Association as her own observation and experience may suggest.

Each Member should regard it as a sacred duty to pray for her children daily, and with them, as often as circumstances may

permit, and conscientiously to restrain them from such courses as would lead to vanity, pride, and worldly-mindedness.

When any Mother is removed by death, it is the duty of the Association to regard with peculiar interest the spiritual welfare of her children, and to evince this interest by a continual remembrance of them in their prayers, and by such tokens of sympathy and kindness as their circumstances may require.

Each Member has the privilege of introducing to the meeting any female friend as a visitor.

The Members have a concert of prayer on Saturday, every week, in behalf of themselves and all the members of their several families, embracing the varied associations of praying mothers in this and other lands.

SUGGESTIONS.

That the Mothers of Maternal Associations do observe the birth-day of their children in such a manner as to keep their spiritual interests especially in view,—endeavouring to train them up for the Lord as far as maternal influence or example can effect that object.

THE END.

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